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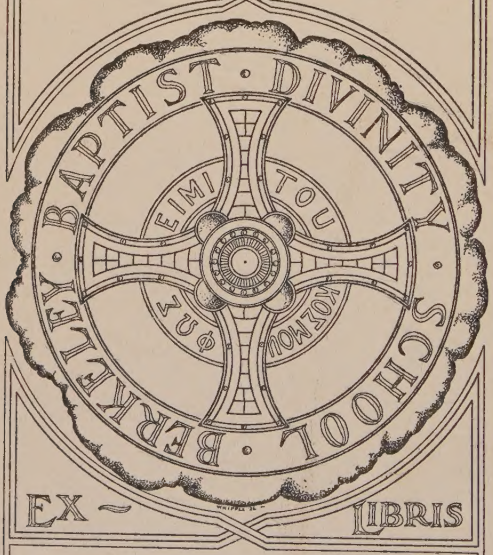

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The Purpose and Use of Comfort

And Other Sermons

By the
Rt. Rev. Phillips Brooks, D.D.

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TO

THE THREE PARISHES

WHICH IT HAS BEEN HIS PRIVILEGE TO SERVE,—

THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT, PHILADELPHIA,

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, PHILADELPHIA,

AND

TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON,—

These Sermons

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THEIR

FRIEND AND MINISTER

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SERMONS.

I.

THE PURPOSE AND USE OF COMFORT.

"Blessed be the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." — 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

The desire for comfort may be a very high or a very low, a noble or a most ignoble wish. It is like the love of life, the wish to keep on living, which may be full of courage and patience, or may be nothing but a cowardly fear of death. We know what kind of comfort it must have been that St. Paul prayed for, and for which he was thankful when it came. We have all probably desired comfort which he would have scorned, and prayed to God in tones which he would have counted unworthy alike of God and of himself.

And the difference in the way in which people ask comfort of God, no doubt, depends very largely upon the reason why they ask it, upon what it is that makes them wish that God would take away their pain and comfort them. The nobleness of actions, we all know, depends more upon the reasons why we do them than on the acts themselves. Very few acts are so essentially noble that they may not be done for an ignoble reason, and so become ignoble. Very few acts are so absolutely mean that

some light may not be cast through them by a bright motive burning within. And so it is not merely with what we do, but with what happens to us. It is not our fortune in life, our sorrow, or our joy; it is the explanation which we give of it to ourselves, the depth to which we see down into it, that makes our lives significant or insignificant to us.

All this, I think, applies to what St. Paul says about the comfort which God had given him. He gave to it its deepest and most unselfish reason, and so the fact of God's comforting him became the exaltation and the strengthening of his life. I should like to study his feeling about it all with you this morning. Out of your closets and pews, from many hearts that need it, hearts sore and wounded with the world, there go up prayers for comfort. This verse of St. Paul seems to me to shine with a supreme motive for such prayers as those, a motive which perhaps as we first look at it will seem overstrained and impossible; but which I hope we shall see is really capable of being felt, and of stirring to their deepest depths the desire and the gratitude of a strong man.

It does not matter what the special trouble was for which God had comforted St. Paul. It happened to be a certain deep anxiety about his church at Corinth. But it might have been anything. The point is this — that Paul thanked God because the comfort which had come to him gave him the power to comfort other people. "Blessed be the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble." Now, my dear friends, try to recall the joy and peace and thankfulness that have ever filled your hearts when you became thoroughly

sure that God had relieved you from some great danger, or opened His hand and shed upon you some great blessing. Think how you thanked Him. Remember how the sense that He loved you occupied your soul. Think how your sense of privilege exalted you and solemnized you. Think how your own happiness filled you with kindliness to other people. But ask yourself at the same time, "Did any such thought as this come up first and foremost to my mind, and seem to me the most precious part of all my blessing, that God had done this for me just to make me a fitter and more transparent medium through which He might send his comfort to other men? When He lifted me up from the gates of death did I thank Him most of all that my experience of danger and deliverance had made clear to some poor sufferer beside me how truly our God is the Lord of life and death? When He came and filled with His own presence the awful blank of my bereavement, did I praise Him most devoutly that my refilled and recreated life could become a gospel to other men of the satisfaction of His perfect friendship?" But this was the beauty of God's comfort to St. Paul. "Blessed be God who comforteth us, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble."

In the first place, then, I think the power of Paul or of any man to grasp and realize this high idea of the purpose of the help which God sends, shows a very clear understanding that it is really God who sends the help. Indeed, I think no man can really mount up to the idea that God truly and personally cares for him enough to reach down and turn the bitterness of his cup to sweetness, without being, as it were, compelled to look beyond him-

self. All strong emotions, all really great ideas, outgo our individual life, and make us feel our human nature. If you are not sure that any mercy comes to you from God; if, whatever pious words you use about it, the recovery of your health, or the saving of your fortune, seems to you a piece of luck, some good thing which has dropped down upon you from the clouds, then you may be meanly and miserably selfish about it. You shut it up within the jealous walls of your own life. It is a light which you have struck out for yourself, and may burn in your own lantern. But if the light came down from God, if He gave you this blessing, it is too big for you to keep to yourself. He must have meant it for a wider circle than your little life can cover, and it breaks through your selfishness to find for itself the mission that it claims. Oh, if men who are disgusted at their own selfishness and unsympathetic narrowness, and who try to break through it and come to their fellow-men in love, but cannot, would learn this higher and profounder method, that the only way really to come close to and to care for men is to realize God; the only way to love the children is to know the Father; the only way to make it our joy and mission to help mankind is to feel all through us the certainty that the help which has come to us has come from God!

Go on a little farther. A man whose first thought about any mercy to himself is that God means by it to help other people, must have something else besides this strong belief that his mercy does really come from God. He must have a genuine unselfishness and a true humility. He must have a habit of looking out beyond himself, a yearning and instinctive wish to know how what comes to him will change the lot and life of other people,

and, along with this, a lowly estimate of his own self, a true humbleness of self-esteem. Put these together into a nature and you clear away those obstructions which, in so many men, stop God's mercies short, and absorb, as personal privileges, what they were meant to radiate as blessings to mankind. Think of it even in reference to the lowest things. Who is the man whom we rejoice to see possessing wealth? Who is the man whose making money on the street delights us, because it means benefaction and help to other men? It is the reverent, the unselfish, and the humble man. It is the man who, as the treasure pours in at his doors, stands saying over it, "God sent this;" and, "I am not worthy of this; He could not have sent it just for me;" and, "Where are my brethren?" Reverence, Humility, Unselfishness. Those are the elements of true stewardship even in the lowest things, and also in the highest. Who is the man who, in his bereavement or his pain, receiving comfort from God radiates it, so that the world is richer by the help the Lord has given him? It is the reverent, the unselfish, and the humble man. The sunlight falls upon a clod, and the clod drinks it in, is warmed by it itself, but lies as black as ever, and sheds out no light. But the sun touches a diamond, and the diamond almost chills itself as it sends out in radiance on every side the light that has fallen on it. So God helps one man bear his pain, and nobody but that one man is a whit the richer. God comes to another sufferer, reverent, unselfish, humble, and the lame leap, and the dumb speak, and the wretched are comforted all around by the radiated comfort of that happy soul. Our lot has been dark indeed if we have not known some souls, reverent, unselfish,

humble, who not merely caught and drank in themselves, but poured out on other sufferers, on us, the comfort of God.

I know one danger which I may seem to incur as I speak thus. It may appear as if in order to find a deep, far-reaching purpose in God's goodness to our souls, to trace it out into designs for other people, we had to take away something from its freedom and spontaneousness; as if it interfered with that first consciousness of the religious life, the first and most surprising, as it is also the last and sweetest and most inexhaustible, that God loves each of us distinctly, separately, and blesses each of us out of His personal love. Nothing must interfere with that. Whatever mercy falls into our lot must be felt warm with the personal love of Him who sends it. It would be better to lose all the larger and longer thoughts of God's care for the world, and think of Him, as men have thought, merely in the light of His love for the individual, than to become so absorbed in the larger thought that the individual should seem to be only the unconsidered machinery through which His power reached the world, blessed by accident, as it were, and on the way, as the blessing sped to some more general and distant need. But we are reduced to no such dilemma. The simpler ideas of religion include the more profound, and open into them without losing their own simplicity. The soul, I think, which has really reached the idea that what God does for it has purposes beyond it in the good of others, comes to a deeper knowledge of the love of God for it. It finds itself honored with confidence and use, as well as gratified with happiness. The older children of a family gradually come to the knowledge of what deeper purposes

run through the government of the household. When a child is young, it seems as if his father's purpose concerning him were just that he should find every hour pleasant, and be happy all the time. As he grows up he learns that his father is treating him with reference to something which lies deeper than his happiness, and also that what his father does to him has reference to the whole family, and is part of a larger scheme. Does that lessen the warmth of his personal gratitude and love? Not unless he is a very mean-minded and jealous child indeed. If he has any largeness of character, it all comes out. A new sacredness appears in the kindness when its designs are known, and as gratitude grows reasonable it grows deeper. So it is with gratitude to God. The superstitious devotee begs for a kindness which is to have no end beyond himself. He asks for comfort and help as if he had to tease it from a God of whims; but the Christian asks, as his highest privilege, to be taken into the purposes of a purposeful Father, and counts it the best part of the stream which refreshes his life, that it goes on through his to refresh some other life beyond. Oh, let us never fear that in making God considerate and reasonable we shall lose His affection; let us never try to keep His love by denying His law. Let us be sure that the more we realize His vaster purposes, the more dearly we can feel His personal care.

And one thing more let me say here. This higher thought of God and His blessings will always be easier and more real to us in proportion as we dwell habitually upon the profounder and more spiritual of His mercies. If what I am in the habit of thanking God for is mainly food and clothes and house, it will not be easy for me to

realize the deepest purpose for which God gives me those things; it will be very easy for me to take them as if the final purpose of them was that I might be warm and well-fed. But if what I thank Him for is spiritual strength, the way in which He helps me bear pain, resist temptation, and feed upon spiritual joy, — in one word, if what I thank Him for most is not that He gives me his gifts, but that He gives me Himself, — then I cannot resist the tendency of that mercy to outgrow my life. The more spiritual is a man's religion, the more expansive and broad it always is. A stream may leave its deposits in the pool it flows through, but the stream itself hurries on to other pools in the thick woods; and so God's gifts a soul may selfishly appropriate, but God Himself, the more truly a soul possesses Him, the more truly it will long and try to share Him.

Thus I have tried to picture the man who in the profoundest way accepts and values God's mercies. You see how clear his superiority is. The Pharisee says, "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," and evidently it is his difference from other men that he values most, and he means to keep himself different from other men as long as possible. The Christian says, "I thank Thee that Thou hast made me this, because it is a sign and may be made a means of bringing other men to the same help and joy." You see how different the two men are: one is hard and selfish; the other is warm and generous. And yet there must be people here this morning who have knelt side by side and both said sincerely, "We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life," who were as far apart from one another as the Pharisee is from the Christian spirit.

But having said thus much in general about the way in which men receive God's comforts, now I should like to take, one after another, a few of the special helps which God gives to men, and see, very briefly, how what I have been saying applies to each of them.

The first of the comforts of God to which I would apply our truth is the comfort which God sends a man when he is in religious doubt. And that does not by any means always take the shape of a solution of his difficulties, and a filling of every darkness with perfect light. God may do that. God does often do that for men. I think that none of us ever ought to believe that any religious difficulty of his is hopeless, and to give it up in despair. We ought always to stand looking at every such difficulty, owning its darkness, but ready to see it brighten as the east brightens with the rising of the sun. Many of our religious doubts are like buildings which stand beside the road which we are travelling, which, as we first come in sight of them, we cannot understand. They are all in confusion. They show no plan. We have come on them from the rear, from the wrong side. But, as we travel on, the road sweeps round them. We come in front of them. Their design unsnarls itself, and we understand the beauty of wall and tower and window. So we come to many religious questions from the rear, from the wrong side. Let us keep on along the open road of righteousness. Some day we shall perhaps face them and see their orderly beauty.

No doubt God does thus answer our questions for us sometimes if we will "walk in His ways." But he knows little of the abundance of God's mercy who thinks that there is no other comfort for the doubting man than this

He has had little experience of God who has not often felt how sometimes, with a question still unanswered, a deep doubt in the soul unsolved, the Father will fold about His doubting child a sense of Himself so deep, so true, so self-witnessing, that the child is content to carry his unanswered question because of the unanswerable assurance of his Father which he has received. Is that a fancy? Surely not. Surely you are comforting your child just in that way every day; comforting him with your love, and the peace of your presence, which passeth all his understanding, for the hundred questions which you cannot answer, and the hundred puzzles which you cannot make him understand. Suppose God gives that sort of comfort to any man. Thenceforth the doubter goes with his curious doubts, not solved, but wrapt about and lost in the richness of a personal faith. But tell me, is it the gain of that one doubter only? Is the world no richer? Is no other questioner helped? Oh, when I see how few men are aided by the arguments with which their friends plead for their faith, compared with those to whom religion becomes a clear reality from the sight of some fellow-man who is evidently living with God, who carries the life of God wherever he goes; when I see how the real difficulty of multitudes of bewildered men is not this or that unsolved problem, but the whole incapacity of comprehending God; when I see this, I understand how the best boon that God can give to any group of men must often be to take one of them — the greatest of them it may be, the least of them it may be — and, bearing witness of Himself to him, set him to bearing that witness of the Lord to his brethren which only a man surrounded and filled with God can bear.

And when we look at the other side, at the doubter himself, and his feeling about the removal of his doubt, it is even more plain. I can find no certainty about religious things, and I hardly dare ask for certainty. It seems like haggling and arguing with God to tell him of my doubts. Who am I that He should care to convince me and answer my questions? It is a bad mood, but it is common enough. But if I can count my enlightenment as something greater than my own release from doubt; if I can see it as part of the process by which "the light that lighteneth every man" is slowly spreading through the world, then it no longer is insignificant. I dare to hope for it. I dare to pray for it. I make myself ready for it. I cast aside frivolity and despair, the two benighteners of the human soul, and when God comes and over, under, nay, through every doubt proves Himself to me, I take Him with a certainty which is as humble as it is solemn and sure.

2. Turn to another of the consolations which God sends to men: the way He proves to us that the soul is more than the body. In the breakage or decay of physical power He brings out spiritual richness and strength. This was something that St. Paul knew well. Only two chapters later in this same epistle there comes the great verse where he describes it. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." It is something whose experience is repeated constantly on every side of us. It is hard for us to imagine how flat and shallow human life would be if there were taken out of it this constant element, the coming up of the spiritual where the physical has failed; and so, as the result of this, the impression, made even upon men who seem to

trust most in the physical, that there is a spiritual life which lies deeper, on which their profoundest reliance must and may be placed. A man who has been in the full whirl of prosperous business fails in these hard-pressed days, and then for the first time he learns the joy of conscious integrity preserved through all temptations, and of daily trust in God for daily bread. A man who never knew an ache or pain comes to a break in health, from which he can look out into nothing but years of sickness; and then the soul within him, which has been so borne along in the torrent of bodily health that it has seemed almost like a mere part and consequence of the bodily condition, separates itself, claims its independence and supremacy, and stands strong in the midst of weakness, calm in the very centre of the turmoil and panic of the aching body. The temper of the fickle people changes, and the favorite of yesterday becomes the victim of to-day; but in his martyrdom for the first time he sees the full value of the truth he dies for, and thanks the flames that have lighted up its preciousness. Now ask yourself in all these cases if it must not be an element in the comfort which fills the sick room, or gathers about the martyr's stake, that by this revelation of the spiritual through the broken physical life other men may learn its value. This is what makes the sick rooms and the martyr fires reasonable. In them has been made manifest by suffering that the soul is really more than the body, that the soul can triumph when the body has nothing left but disease and misery. There are young people here looking forward to their lives, wondering what God has in reserve for them in these mysterious and beautiful years which lie before them. It may be health, strength,

joy, activity. I trust it is. But you must own that it would be no sign of God's displeasure, but rather of His truest love, if the life which He assigned should prove to be all comprised in this: that by some form of suffering and disappointment you were first to find out for yourself, and then to manifest to some circle of your fellow-men, that the soul is more precious than the body, and has a happiness and strength which no bodily experience can touch. What would you not suffer if your life could be made a beacon to show the world that?

This is the secret of great men. And in all the greatest men there is some sense of this always present. No man has come to true greatness who has not felt in some degree that his life belongs to his race, and that what God gives him He gives him for mankind. The different degrees of this consciousness are really what makes the different degrees of greatness in men. If you take your man full of acuteness, at the top of his specialty, of vast knowledge, of exhaustless skill, and ask yourself where the mysterious lack is which keeps you from thinking that man great, — why it is that although he may be a great naturalist, or a great merchant, or a great inventor, he is not a great man, — the answer will be here, that he is selfish: that what God gives him stops in himself; that he has no such essential humanity as to make his life a reservoir from which refreshment is distributed, or a point of radiation for God's light. And then if you take another man, rude, simple, untaught, in whom it is hard to find special attainments or striking points of character, but whom you instinctively call great, and ask yourself the reason of that instinct, I think you find it in the fact that that man has this quality: that his life does take all which it receives,

not for its own use but in trust; that in the highest sense it is unselfish, so that by it God reaches men, and it is His greatness that you feel in it. For greatness after all, in spite of its name, appears to be not so much a certain size as a certain quality in human lives. It may be present in lives whose range is very small. There is greatness in a mother's life whose utter unselfishness fills her household with the life and love of God, transmitted through her consecration. There is greatness in a child's life who is patient under a wrong and shows the world at some new point the dignity of self-restraint and the beauty of conquered passions. And thence we rise until we come to Christ and find the perfection of His human greatness in His transmissiveness; in the fact that what He was as man, He was not for Himself alone but for all men, for mankind. All through the range of human life, from lowest up to highest, any religious conception of human greatness must be ultimately reducible to this: a quality in any man by which he is capable first of taking into himself, and then of distributing through himself to others, some part of the life of God.

I spoke just now of Jesus and His greatness. It seems to me that most of the struggles of theology to define His work are really trying to get hold of and utter this idea: that in Him was the perfect power of uttering God to men and of being full of God not for Himself only but for mankind. His headship of our race, His mediatorship, His atonement, are various ways of stating this idea. Everything that He was and did, He was and did for us. He lived his life, He died his death, for us. He took sorrow for us. He took joy and comfort for us also. Let me not say that Christ saves us only by what He suffered

for us. He saves us by what He enjoyed for us too. The completeness and unity of His salvation lies in the completeness and unity with which His whole life, in its joy and pain together, lies between us and God, so that through it God comes to us and we go to God. Let us always pray that we may lose the blessing of no part of the complete mediatorship of our Mediator.

3. There is one other of the comforts of God to which I hoped that we might apply our truth, but I must take only a moment for it. I mean the comfort which God gives a man who has found out his sin and has repented of it. That comfort is forgiveness, — forgiveness promised by Christ, assured by the whole loving nature of God, and sealed by the new life of thankful obedience which begins at once in the forgiven man. And what shall we say of that forgiveness? Is it only for the forgiven man that it is bestowed, that God loves to bestow it so? It often seems to me as if we took too low a ground in pleading with the man living in sin and indifference to turn around, to be converted and live another life. We tell him of his danger. That puts it on the lowest ground We assure him that no man can go on in wilful sin in a universe over which a good God reigns, without sooner or later coming to unhappiness, nay, without really being in unhappiness all the time, however it may seem to him. We go higher than that: we tell him of the happiness of the life with God. We assure him of faculties in himself, capable of a kind of pleasure which he does not know, which will come out to their true enjoyment if he will only come to God. We tell him of the heaven of the inner life here, and then point onward to the dim but certain joys of the heaven that stands with its golden

walls and gates of pearl in the splendor of the revelation there. Many men hear and believe. Many men hear and do not believe. Suppose we took a higher strain; suppose we cast all selfishness aside; suppose we pointed to a world all full of wickedness, a world self-willed, rebellious against God; suppose we went to men and said: "Think of this. Every time any man humbly takes God's forgiveness, enters into Christ's service, begins a godly life, that man becomes a new witness to this world of how strong and good the Saviour is. Here is Christ. There are the men who need Him. If you will let Him fill and possess your life, He will make these men see Him through you. And look, how they need to see Him! Not for yourself now, but for them, for Him, take His forgiveness and give up yourself inwardly and outwardly to Him." So used one grows to find men respond to the noblest motives who are deaf to a motive which is less noble, that I am ready to believe that there are men among you, whose faces I know, whom I have so often urged to be Christians, who might feel this higher appeal. Is it nothing that by a new purity and devotion in your life, brought there by obedience to Christ, you may help men out of their sins to Him? His promises seem to the men you meet too good to be true, so glorious and sweet that they are unreal. Take them to yourself. Let them shine in their manifest power through the familiar windows of your life. Be a new man in Christ for these men's sake. Put your hand in His, that as He leads you other men, who have turned away from Him, may look and see you walking with Him, learn to love Him through your love. I do not believe any man ever yet genuinely, humbly, thoroughly gave himself to Christ without some

other finding Christ through him. I wish it might tempt some of your souls to the higher life. I hope it may. At least I am sure that it may add a new sweetness and nobleness to the consecration which some young heart is making of itself to-day, if it can hear, down the new path on which it is entering, not merely the great triumphant chant of personal salvation, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins be glory and dominion;" but also the calmer, deeper thanksgiving for usefulness, "Blessed be the God of comfort, who comforteth us that we may be able to comfort them that are in tribulation."

Such are a few of the illustrations and applications of the truth which I have tried to define and to urge upon you this morning. The truth is that we are our best when we try to be it not for ourselves alone, but for our brethren; and that we take God's gifts most completely for ourselves when we realize that He sends them to us for the benefit of other men, who stand beyond us needing them. I have spoken very feebly, unless you have felt something of the difference which it would make to all of us if this truth really took possession of us. It would make our struggles after a higher life so much more intense as they become more noble. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," said Jesus; and He hardly ever said words more wonderful than those. There was the power by which He was holy; the world was to be made holy, was to be sanctified through Him. I am sure that you or I could indeed be strengthened to meet some great experience of pain if we really believed that by our suffering we were to be made luminous with help to other men. They are to get from us painlessly what we have got most painfully from God. There is the power of the

bravest martyrdom and the hardest work that the world has ever seen.

And again, it would make our spiritual lives and experiences more recognizable and certain things. Not by mere moods, not by how I feel to-day or how I felt yesterday, may I know whether I am indeed living the life of God, but only by knowing that God is using me to help others. No mood is so bright that it can do without that warrant. No mood is so dark that, if it has that, it need despair. It is good for us to think no grace or blessing truly ours till we are aware that God has blessed some one else with it through us.

I have not painted an ideal and impossible picture to you to-day, my friends. This truth and all the motives that flow from it may really fill your life. They filled the life of Christ. Come near to Him; be like Him, and they shall fill yours. So your Gethsemane and the angels that come to you after it may be precious to you as His were to Him, not only for the peace which they brought Him, but because they were to be the fountain of strength and hope to countless souls forever. May God grant us something of the privilege of Christ, which was to live a manly life for God's sake, and also to live a godly life for men's sake; for it was thus that He was a mediator between God and man.

II.

THE WITHHELD COMPLETIONS OF LIFE.

"Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?" — John xiii. 37.

It is from passages like this that we have all gathered our impression of St. Peter's character, an impression probably clearer and more correct than we have with regard to any other of the Lord's disciples. Here is all his impulsiveness and affection, the unreasonableness and impatience which still excite our admiration and our love because they strike the note of a deeper and diviner reason, of which the prudent people seldom come in sight. They were sitting together at the Last Supper. Jesus had just told his friends that He must leave them. Simon Peter was the first to leap forward with the question, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Jesus replied, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." There was the promise of a future companionship between the disciple and the Master, which was to carry on and complete the companionship of the past, whose preciousness was now coming out as it drew near its close. There opened before the loving man a mysterious but beautiful prospect of some more perfect paths through which he might walk with Jesus, and find the completion of that intercourse of which the well-remembered walks through the streets of Jerusa-

lem and the lanes of Galilee had been only the promise The keen joy of dying with his Lord seemed all that was needed to finish the joy of living with Him; and when he sees all this deferred, when Christ is, as it seems, gathering up His robes to walk alone into the experience that lies before Him, Peter breaks out in a cry of impatience, "Why cannot I follow Thee *now?*" The life with Jesus, which is the only life for him, seems to be passing hopelessly away. The promise of a future day when it shall be restored to him does not satisfy him; indeed it hardly seems to take hold of him at all. He wants it now. It was unreasonable. So it is unreasonable when by the side of your friend's grave you wish that you could die and enter at once upon the everlasting companionship. So it is unreasonable when, as your friend goes alone into a cloud of sorrow, the sunlight of prosperity in which you are left standing seems hateful to you, and you grudge him his solitary pain. How unreasonable Peter was appeared only a few hours later, when his denial proved his unfitness to go with Jesus into the mystery and pain which He was entering. It is an unreasonable impatience, but it is one that makes us love and honor the unreasonable man, and adds a new pleasure to the study of all Peter's after-life, as we watch him treading more and more in his Lord's footsteps, and at last really following his Lord into His glory.

It has seemed to me as if this verse opened a great subject, one which is continually pressing upon us, one that is full of practical bewilderments; a subject that must come home to the thoughts of many of the people in this congregation. That subject is, The Withheld Completions of Life. St. Peter felt dimly that the life of

Jesus was opening into something so large that all which had gone before would be seen to have been only the vestibule and preparation for what was yet to come. He vaguely felt that this death, in whose shadow they were sitting, was the focus into which all the lines along which they had travelled were converging only that they might open into larger and more wonderful fields of experience. And just then, when his expectation was keenest, when his love was most eager, an iron curtain fell across his view. "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now," said Jesus. The completion was withheld. The life of Jesus was broken off, and they who had lived with Him were left standing bewildered and distressed in front of the mystery which hid Him from their sight.

And that is what is always happening; what it is so hard for us to understand and yet what we must understand, or life is all a puzzle. For all our life has its tendencies. It would be intolerable to us if we could not trace tendencies in our life. If everything stood still, or if things only moved round in a circle, it would be a dreary and a dreadful thing to live. But we rejoice in life because it seems to be carrying us somewhere; because its darkness seems to be rolling on towards light, and even its pain to be moving onward to a hidden joy. We bear with incompleteness, because of the completion which is prophesied and hoped for. But it is the delay of that completion, the way in which, when we seem to be all ready for it, it does not come; the way in which, when we seem to be just on the brink of it, the iron curtain drops across our path; this is what puzzles and distresses us. The tendency that is not allowed to reach the fulfillment which alone gave it value seems a mockery.

You watch your plant growing, and see its wonderful building of the woody fibre, its twining of the strong roots, its busy life-blood hurrying along its veins. The dignity and beauty of the whole process is in the completion which it all expects. Some morning you step into your garden and the deep-red flower is blazing full-blown on the stem, and all is plain. The completion has justified the process. But suppose the plant to have been all the time conscious of the coming flower, to have felt its fire already in the tumultuous sap, and yet to have felt itself held back from blossoming. Not to-day! not to-day each morning as it tried to crown itself with the glory toward which all its tendencies had struggled. Would it not be a very puzzled and impatient and unhappy little plant, as it stood wondering why its completion was withheld, and what delayed its flower?

Now there are certain conditions which are to all good life just what the flower is to the plant. They furnish it its natural completion. They crown its struggles with a manifest success. There are certain fine results of feeling and contentment which are the true and recognized results of the best ways of living. They crown the hidden resolutions and the prosaic struggles of men with beautiful conclusiveness, as the gorgeous flower finishes all that the buried root and the rugged stalk of the plant have done, and make it a perfect and satisfactory thing. The flower is the plant's success. These conditions of peace and pleasure are the life's success in the same way. But when the life, conscious of the character in itself out of which these conditions ought to come, finds that they do not come, finds that it pauses on the brink of its completion and cannot blossom, then comes bewilderment

then come impatient questionings and doubts. This is the state of many lives, I think, especially about religious things. I want to speak with you of this, and see if we can get any light upon it.

But lest I speak too vaguely, let me take special instances. In that way we can understand it best, and here is the first, perhaps the simplest. Suppose we have a man thoroughly, genuinely, unselfishly devoted to the good of fellow-men. It is not so uncommon as we think. It matters not upon what scale the self-devotion may take place. A poor obscure woman in a sick-room giving her days and nights, her health and strength, to some poor invalid; or a great brilliant man out in the world neglecting his personal interests in the desire that some of the lagging causes of God may be helped forward, or that the men of the city may be better clothed and fed and housed. Now such a life, in whatever scale it may be lived, has its legitimate completion. There is one natural and healthy result to which it is all tending, one flower into whose beauty its hard work was made to bloom. The natural flower which should crown that life of self-devotion is men's gratitude. The joyous, thankful recognition of your fellow-men is the true issue of the life which gives itself for them. Perhaps in ringing cheers that make the world stand still to listen, perhaps only in the weak, silent pressure of the hand, or the last feeble lighting of the eyes, with which he whose sick-bed you have watched thanks you unutterably just as he dies; some way or other, thanks is the completion of service. The two belong together, service and thanks; not in the way of bargain, not by deliberate arrangement, but in the very nature of the things. The man who does

no good expects no thanks. The selfish life feels and shows the unnaturalness if men make a mistake and lavish their gratitude upon it. It is as if men tied the glorious flower on to the top of a wooden post that has no germinating power. But to the life that serves, the gratitude that recognizes service belongs as the warmth belongs to the sunlight, or the echo to the sound. And now suppose that the gratitude does not come. Your friend turns his face to the wall and dies, and never looks at you. The people pass you by, and waste their cheers upon some charlatan who has been working for himself. What then? Is there no disappointment of the soul; no sense of a withheld completion; no consciousness of something wrong, of something that falls short of the complete and rounded issue which was natural? Indeed there is! "What does it mean?" you ask with wonder, even with impatience.

And in answer to your wondering question there are two things to be said. The first is this: that such a suspension of the legitimate result, this failure of the flower to complete the plant, does show beyond all doubt a real condition of disorder. The natural result of your self-devotion has not come because the state of things in which you live is unnatural. That must be recognized. There is a reason in your wonder and surprise. Something is wrong. If you let your surprise appear, if men can see, as they look into your face, pain and bewilderment at their ingratitude, no doubt they will misunderstand you. They will laugh and jeer. They will cry, "Oh, after all, then, you were not unselfish; you did this thing not for us, but to be seen of men and to be thanked. It is good enough for you not to get it if that was what

you wanted." But it may very well be that they are wrong; you were unselfish; you did not work for thanks. When the thanks do not come it is not your loss, it is the deranged, disordered state of things which the world shows that troubles you. When Jesus wept over ungrateful Jerusalem, did He not feel its ingratitude? But was it not the disturbed world where such ingratitude was possible, and not any mere loss of recognition of Himself, which lay at the bottom of his grief? When your child is ungrateful to you, is it the neglect of yourself, or is it not the deranged family, the broken and demoralized home, that saddens you? It is the violation of a deep, true instinct. I think that this is always on Christ's soul. The world's ingratitude to Him showed Him how wrong the world was. In a perfect world every tendency must open to its result. Its Christ must be greeted with hosannas. They who receive His blessings must give Him their praise. The world is broken and disordered, that is the first thing that is meant when you help men and they scorn you, when the world's benefactors are neglected or despised.

But let us never think that we have reached all the meaning when we have reached that. Because any state of things is unnatural, it does not prove that there can come out of it no blessing. God very often leaves the consequences of a man's sins untouched, but in the midst of them makes it possible for His servant to live all the better life by the very derangements and distortions by which he is surrounded. So it is here. The service that a man does to his fellow-men does not bring down their gratitude upon him. And what then? There is a blessing which may come to him even out of the withhold-

ing of the legitimate completion of his service. It may throw him back upon the nature of the act itself, and compel him to find his satisfaction there. Many a man who, having served his brethren in public or in private, has looked up from his work with a true human longing that his work should be recognized, and heard no sound of gratitude, has then retreated to the self-sacrifice itself and found, in the mere doing of that, an even deeper, even keener joy than he could have gathered from the most spontaneous and hearty thanks. That has been the support, the inner triumph of many a despised reformer and misunderstood friend. Men have found a joy which they could not have had in a world undisturbed, and whose moral order was perfect. The essence of any act is more and finer than its consequences are. It is better to live in the essence of an act than in its consequences or rewards. The consequences of an act are meant to interpret and manifest its essence; but if at any time the withholding of its consequence can drive us home more deep into its essence, is it not a blessing?

I think we cannot doubt that Christ's life manifested the essential and eternal joy of serving God, the dignity and beauty of helping man, as it could not have done if it had been heralded by the trumpets and followed by the cheers of human gratitude. Because He was "despised and rejected of men," we are able to see more clearly how truly He was His Father's "well-beloved Son." And if, as it may be, you, with no morbidness, no self-conceit, no querulousness, know that you have been helping some man, or some hundred men, from whom you get no gratitude, — the manly thing for you to do in that withholding of the natural completion of your life is just what

Christ did: first own that the world is out of order, and do not look with any certain confidence for a recognition which could be certain only in a world of moral perfectness; and then let its withholding drive you home to the blessedness of the service of other men in and for itself, recognized or unrecognized, thanked or unthanked, and to companionship with God, who understands it all.

As we come into the regions of more truly spiritual experience this truth of the withheld completions of life becomes more striking, and often much more puzzling. As we come to that history which goes on within a man's own heart, and where the action of other men does not intrude, it seems more strange that each cause cannot produce its full effect, and each growth blossom to its appointed flower. But even here I think that if we keep in mind the two considerations which I have been speaking of we shall find in them, if not the sufficient explanations, at least the supporting consolations of the withheld completions of our life. Look, for instance, at the connection of duty and happiness. Happiness is the natural flower of duty. The good man ought to be a thoroughly bright and joyous man. This is no theoretical conviction. It is the first quick instinct of the human heart. We do not know, I think, how deep in us lies this assurance that goodness and happiness belong together, how impossible it would be to take it out of us without deranging all our life. Just think, if there were no such assurance, what a dreadful thing happiness would be in the world. If to be happy meant nothing, or meant badness, if it had no connection with being good, how a laugh in the street would be dreadful to us, and the look of a bright, gay, happy face would strike upon our con-

science like a cloud that sweeps across the sun. But no. From the innocence of childhood uttering itself in the child's sunny joy, on through the whole of life, there runs one constant conviction that goodness and happiness belong together. That conviction meets a thousand contradictions, but it is too strong for them all. It runs like a mountain stream along a course all blocked with rocks of difficulty; but none of them can permanently hinder it or turn it back. It slips under or around them all, this deep and live conviction that the tendency of goodness is to happiness. In this conviction lies the poetry of human life. This conviction has planted the Edens which all races have discerned behind them, and painted the Heavens which they have all seen before them. It is bound up with all belief in God. To cease to believe it would be to bow down at the footstool of a devil or a chance, and which of these would be the most terrible master who can say? With this conviction strong in us we come to some man's life, — a life which we are sure is good; to call it wicked is to confuse all our idea of wickedness and goodness. And that life is all gloomy. Duty is done day after day, but done in utter dreariness; there is no smile upon the face, no ring of laughter in the voice; a good man, a just and pure man, a man who hates sin and whom you would not dare to think of tempting, and yet a sad man, not a glad man; a man to whom life is a burden, not an exhilaration and a joy. Such men there are; good without gladness, shocking and perplexing our deep certainty that to be good and to be glad belong together. To them we want to bring the two considerations which I dwelt on when I was speaking of self-sacrifice and gratitude.

To recognize that it is unnatural, and so to struggle against it, not to yield to it, and yet, while it must last, to get what blessing we can out of it, by letting it drive us down deeper for our joy and comfort, into the very act and fact of doing righteousness, that is all that we can do, and that is enough to do when the golden link is broken and doing righteousness does not blossom into being happy. "I am trying to do right," a man says, "and yet the world is all dark to me; what can you say to me? Will you tell me still that there is a natural connection between doing right and being happy?" Surely I will, I answer. I will insist on your remembering it. I will warn you never to forget it, nor to get to counting gloominess the natural air and atmosphere of duty. I will beg you never to think it right, that when you are trying to be good you should still be unhappy. You must struggle against it. And yet, you must let the very fact that the connection can be broken prove to you that while the union of duty and joy is natural it is not essential and unbreakable. The plant ought to come to flower, but if the plant fails of its flower it is still a plant. The duty should open into joy, but it may fail of joy and still be duty. If the joy is not there, still hold the duty, and be sure that you have the real thing while you are holding that. Be all the more dutiful, though it be in the dark. Do righteousness and forget happiness, and so it is most likely that happiness will come. This is all that one can say, and this is enough to say. It will help the man neither despondently to submit to nor frantically to rebel against the unnatural postponement of the happiness which belongs to his struggle to do right. It will help him to be hopeful without impatience, and patient without despair.

But take another case, that comes still more distinctly within the limits of Christian experience. There are promises in the Bible, many of them, which declare that dedication to God shall bring communion with God. "Draw near to me and I will draw near to you," says God. And even without the special promise, that whole revelation of God which the Bible gives us involves such a necessity. It cannot be that a God all love surrounds us with His life, presses upon us, waits for us on every side, and yet the meanest soul can really turn to Him and throw itself open before Him, and not receive Him into its life. And yet sometimes the man does give himself to God, and the promise seems to fail. The heart draws near to God in conscious dedication, and it seems as if no answering communion came. The soul is laid upon the altar, and no hand of fire is seen reached out from heaven to take it up in love. Day follows day, year follows year, it may be, and the man given to God trembles when he hears other men talk of the joy of divine communion, because no such ever comes to him. Once more, to such a soul, to any such soul which is here to-day, there are the same two messages to bring. Never, no matter how long such exclusion from the presence of God may seem to last, though it go on year after year and you are growing old in your seeming orphanhood; never accept it, never make up your mind to it that it is right; never cease to expect that the doors will fly open and you will be admitted to all the joy of your Father's felt love and of unhindered communion with Him. Never lose out of your soul's sight the seat which is set for you in the very sanctuary of divine love. And what beside? Seek even more deeply the satisfaction which is in your

consecration itself; and that you may find it, consecrate yourself more and more completely. Oh, it may well be that there are some of you who are listening intently at this moment, thinking perhaps that now, after a thousand disappointments in a thousand sermons, you may hear the word you need, which shall explain this terrible separation from your Father, which, while you give yourselves with all your souls to Him, still keeps you shut out from His communion. I cannot tell you all you want to know. Nobody can. But there are two great anxieties which I do feel for such a soul as yours. One is, lest you should give up hoping for and expecting that privilege of communion which, however long it be delayed, because you are a child of God is certainly yours in possibility, and must certainly be yours some day in possession. The other is, lest, since the consecration has not brought you the communion, you should think that the consecration is unreal, and so lose the power to be blessed by it, and the impulse to increase it. Christ has led you with Him thus far up to the line where you have given yourself to Him. Before you, open the fields where you see the privilege of having His fulness given to you. But something seems to come across and shut you out from them. No wonder that you lift up a cry almost of bitterness: "Why cannot I follow thee now? Why this delay of the divinest life? Why so much duty with so little strength? Why only the journey and the hunger and the thirst, without the brook of refreshment by the way?" No man can wholly answer these questions, but multitudes of saints, if they could speak, would tell you how in their hindered lives God kept them true to such experience as they had attained; and so it was that, by

and by, either before or after the great enlightenment of death, the hindrance melted away, and they who had been crying for years, "Lord, why cannot we follow Thee now?" passed forth into the multitude of those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

There is one other of the withheld completions of life of which I should like to speak, and only one. Among Christ's promises there is none that is dearer to one class of minds, minds of a very pure and noble character, than that which He spoke one day when He was in discussion with the Jews in the Temple. "If any man wills to do my will," He said, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." I have been struck by seeing how favorite a text that has become in our day. Many minds have rested upon it. Many earnest seekers after truth, bewildered by the difficulties of doctrine, almost ready to give up in despair have welcomed this declaration of the Lord, and gone out with new hope, that by the dedication of their wills, by trying to become obedient to Christ, they should come to understand the Christ who was so dark to them. Many and many a soul has found that that was indeed the message that it needed. Turning away from vain disputes of words, leaving theological subtleties alone, just trying to turn what it knew of Christ into a life, it has found — what He promised — that it has become assured of His divinity, sure that His doctrine was of God. Such souls have not found that the thousand curious questions of theology were answered, and all the mystery rolled away out of the sky of truth. Christ did not promise that. But they have found what He did promise: that coming near to Him in obedience, they have been made sure of

the true divinity that was in Him and in the teachings that He gave. Such testimony comes abundantly from all the ages, and from many souls to-day. It is not strange. It is like all Christ's teachings, — one utterance of an essential universal truth. Everywhere the flower of obedience is intelligence. Obey a man with cordial loyalty and you will understand him. Obey Jesus with cordial loyalty and you will understand Jesus. Not by studying Him, but by doing His will, shall you learn how divine He is. Obedience completes itself in understanding.

And now are there any of us from whom that completion seems to have been withheld? Are there any of us who, trying hard to do the Lord's will wherever He has made it known to them, looking for it continually, are yet distressed to know that their Lord's nature has not become all clear to them? They must be sure, first, that they are right; sure that Christ has not done for them what He promised, though He may not have done what they chose to expect. They must be sure that they have not really come to an essential faith that the doctrine of Jesus is divine. To many souls that faith has come, while, bewildered still by various forms of expression, they cannot even recognize their own belief. They must be sure again that their will to serve Christ has been indeed true; not simply the trying of an experiment from which they still reserved the liberty to withdraw, but the unreserved and total dedication of themselves to Him. And what then? Sure of all this, still the darkness and the doubts remain. Then they must come, it seems to me, to the two principles which I have enforced this morning. Then they must say to themselves: "This is unnatural; it

ought not to be. My service, my true will-dedication ought to bring me out into the light; at least I will remember that. I will not be content with darkness. I will not let despair of positive belief settle down on me with its chilling power. I will not rest until my service of Christ completes itself in the knowledge of Christ; and yet all the time while I am waiting I will find joy in the service of Him, however dimly I may apprehend Him. I will find deeper and deeper satisfaction in doing His will, though it be in the midst of many doubts, though I be sorely puzzled when men ask me to give my account of Him. It may be that just because obedience is not able at once to complete itself in knowledge, the pure joy and deep culture which are in obedience itself may come to me more really and more richly." That is no barren lesson, my dear friends, to come to any man. You would not find it a barren lesson if it could come to you to-day. If to your life, struggling in obedience to Christ, but not able to clear itself into light about Christ, there could come, as from the Christ you long for, a command to you to struggle on still in hope because you must reach the light some day; and yet a command, while the light is withheld, to find satisfaction and growth in the ever-deepening struggle, would not that be the command you need? Oh that in His name I could utter this message to any souls who are thus trying to do His will, and yet seeming not to know His doctrine! Oh that I could bid them with His voice to persevere because there is light ahead, and yet to be thankful even now for the culture of the darkness! "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." "Watch, therefore!"

I hope, then, that I have made clear this story of the withheld completions of our human life. The plant grows on toward its appointed flower, but before the blossom comes some hand is laid upon it, and the day of its blossoming is delayed. I have dwelt on a few illustrations, but the truth is everywhere. The emotional and affectional conditions are the natural flower of the wills and dedications of our life. But we resolve, we dedicate ourselves, and, though the prophecy and hope immediately begin to assert themselves all through us, the joy, the peace, the calmness of assurance, does not come. We are like southern plants, taken up to a northern climate and planted in a northern soil. They grow there, but they are always failing of their flowers. The poor exiled shrub dreams by a native longing of a splendid blossom which it has never seen, but is dimly conscious that it ought somehow to produce. It feels the flower which it has not strength to make in the half chilled but still genuine juices of its southern nature. That is the way in which the ideal life, the life of full completions, haunts us all. Nothing can really haunt us except what we have the beginning of, the native capacity for, however hindered, in ourselves. The highest angel does not tempt us because he is of another race from us; but God is our continual incitement because we are His children. So the ideal life is in our blood, and never will be still. We feel the thing we ought to be beating beneath the thing we are. Every time we see a man who has attained our human idea a little more fully than we have, it wakens our languid blood and fills us with new longings. When we see Christ, it is as if a new live plant out of the southern soil were brought suddenly in among its poor stunted, trans-

planted brethren, and, blossoming in their sight, interpreted to each of them the restlessness and discontent which was in each of their poor hearts. When, led by Christ, we see God, it is as if the stunted, flowerless plants grew tall enough to stand up and look across all the miles that lie between, and see the glory of the perfect plant as it blooms in unhindered luxuriance in its southern home. And when we die and go to God, it is as if at last the poor shrub were plucked up out of its exile and taken back and set where it belonged, in the rich soil, under the warm sun, where the patience which it had learned in its long waiting should make all the deeper and richer the flower into which its experience was set free to find its utterance.

Patience and struggle. An earnest use of what we have now, and, all the time, an earnest discontent until we come to what we ought to be. Are not these what we need, — what in their rich union we could not get, except in just such a life as this with its delayed completions? Jesus does not blame Peter when he impetuously begs that he may follow Him now. He bids him wait and he shall follow Him some day. But we can see that the value of his waiting lies in the certainty that he shall follow, and the value of his following, when it comes, will lie in the fact that he has waited. So, if we take all Christ's culture, we are sure that our life on earth may get already the inspiration of the heaven for which we are training, and our life in heaven may keep forever the blessing of the earth in which we were trained.

III.

THE CONQUEROR FROM EDOM.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" — ISAIAH lxiii. 1.

THIS chapter of Isaiah opens in a strain of the loftiest prophetic poetry. A representative of Israel stands looking down one of the long ravines which open from the central mountain region of the country toward the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. As he watches he sees a stranger approaching him, who has crossed the valley from the heights beyond, where the enemies and the heathen live, and is climbing up into the hills of Judea. It is an heroic figure. The stature is grand. The head is proud and high. The steps are free and stately. The garments are noble, and here and there upon them, staining and illustrating their brightness, are the marks of blood. The Genius of Israel, for so we may conceive of the first speaker, is filled with amazement and challenges the new-comer with this ringing question: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" Then comes the answer: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." As he comes nearer the mysterious and awful stains upon his clothing become more clear, and the Genius questions him again: "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and

thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" And then the great stranger answers, with the story of a struggle and a victory: "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me, for I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

What does it mean! — the prophetic Genius waiting, watching, and questioning; the mighty stranger coming fresh from victorious battle, with the robe red as if with the stain of grapes, coming up from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Edom, remember, was the country where the Israelites' most inveterate enemies lived. No other nation pressed on them so constantly or gave them such continual trouble as the Edomites. And Bozrah was the capital city of Edom, the centre of its power. When the conqueror comes from Edom, then, and finds Israel anxious and eager upon the mountain, and shows her his stained robe in sign of the struggle which he has gone through, and then tells her that the victory is complete, that because he saw that she had no defender he has undertaken her defence and trodden Edom under foot for her, we can understand something of the power and comfort of such a poetic vision to the Hebrew's heart. There may have been some special

event which it commemorated. Some special danger may have threatened on the side of the tumultuous Edomites, and some special unexpected deliverer may have appeared who saved the country, and was honored by this song of praise.

But every such special deliverance to the deep religious and patriotic feeling of the Jew had a much wider meaning. Every partial mercy to his nation always pointed to the one great mercy which was to embrace all others, to the coming of the Messiah, whose advent was to be the source of every good, and the cure of every evil. This larger strain sounds under all their Psalms of thankfulness or hope. In their darkest days every little ray of light was a stray gleam of this great sun-rising which was at hand. Every sound of success seemed like His far-off footstep. And so these words of Isaiah mount to a higher strain than any that could have greeted an Israelite warrior who might have made a successful incursion into Edomite soil. The prophet is singing of the victorious Messiah. He, that majestic figure that haunts all Hebrew history and makes it all poetic, — He it is that comes up from Edom, which stands here to represent the sum of all the foes of Israel, with stained garments that show the terribleness of the struggle, and with step and face that manifest the completeness of His victory. It is the triumph of the Messiah that is being sung.

This brings it, as you see, close to us. This Hebrew Messiah has come, and is more than the Hebrew Messiah: He is the Christian's Christ, He is our Saviour. See how the old vision is elevated once more to a yet larger application. The victory of Christ, the destruction of evil by good, the conquest over the devil by the Son of God,

at cost, with pain, so that as He comes forth His robes are red with blood; the redemption of mankind from sin by the divine and human Saviour, — this is the largest and completest meaning of the ancient vision. This is what the old poetry of Isaiah has to say to us. Let us look at this to-night and try to understand it. Let us try to get at some knowledge of the Saviour coming back from His victorious work with the blood-stains on His garments and the blessings of peace in His full hands to give to all His people.

I think that very often now this sounds strange and incomprehensible; this absorption of every struggle between the good and the evil that is going on in the world into the one great struggle of the life and death of Jesus Christ; but it follows necessarily from any such full idea as we Christians hold of what Jesus Christ is and of what brought Him to this world. If He be really the Son of God, bringing in an utterly new way the power of God to bear on human life; if He be the natural creator-king of humanity, come for the salvation of humanity; then it would seem to follow that the work of salvation must be His and His alone: and if we see the process of salvation, the struggle of the good against the evil, going on all over the world, we shall be ready still to feel that it is all under His auspices and guidance; that the effort of any benighted soul in any darkest heathen land to get away from its sins, and cast itself upon an assured mercy of its God, is part of His great work, is to the full intelligent faith of the well-taught Christian believer just what the struggle of a blind plant underground to reach the surface is to the free aspiration of the oak-tree, which in the full glory of the sun-

light reaches out its eager branches toward the glorious sun, — a result of the same power, and a contribution to the same victorious success. All forces strive after simplicity and unity. Operations in nature, in mechanics, in chemistry, which men have long treated as going on under a variety of powers, are gradually showing themselves to be the fruits of one great mightier power, which in many various forms of application is able to produce them all. This is the most beautiful development of our modern science. The Christian belief in Christ holds the same thing of the spiritual world, and unites all partial victories everywhere into one great victory which is the triumph of its Lord. Notice, I beg you, that on no other ground can Christianity stand with its exclusive claims, and Christianity is in its very nature exclusive. Some vagrant ship carries you over the waters and sets you down in some most heathen island, where no single ear has ever heard the first word about the incarnation, about the birth at Bethlehem or the death on Calvary. You live there long enough to get into the heart of those savage folk and understand them, you see what their souls are about, and lo, underneath the thick crust of savage life you find the same old eternal struggle of good and evil, of right and wrong, nay more, very blindly, very darkly, you find the same old reaching after God, and the same assurance that He is love and that He may show Himself in forgiveness, which you left behind you in the familiar streets and pews of Boston. What shall you say about it? That what is good in Boston is not good in your island? That good and evil change their characters with changing climates? That confuses your whole moral judgment. Shall you say that this good in

the island comes of some local source, distinct from that which made the Christians good and brave and patient whom you used to know at home? That cuts the moral world to bits and leaves no unity and so no certainty or strength. What then? If I believe in Christ at home, I believe in Him off here. Not so strongly because in the dark, but yet strongly because it is His, here is the power of the human Christ at work. Once accept what is the central truth of operative Christianity, the power of an ever-present unseen Spirit, always manifesting Christ and making Him influential, and then it is not hard to see that, men being the same, open to the same influence everywhere, they may be and they are turned to the one same goodness by the power of the one same spirit of Christ.

Indeed here, in the susceptibility of all men to the same influences of the highest sort, there comes out the only valuable proof of the unity of the human race, I think. Demonstrate what you may about the diversity of origin or structure of humanity, so long as the soul capable of the great human struggle and the great human helps is in every man, the human race is one. On the other hand, demonstrate as perfectly as you will the identity of origin and structure of all humanity, yet if you find men so spiritually different in two hemispheres that the same largest obligations do not impress and the same largest loves do not soften them, what does your unity of the human race amount to? Here, it seems to me, Christ, in His broad appeal to all men of all races, is the true assertor of the only valuable human unity.

If this be so, then wherever there is good at work in the world, we Christians may see the progress of the

struggle and rejoice already in the victory of Christ. It does us good. It enlarges and simplifies our thought of Christ's religion. He shall conquer. The eye of faith already sees Him coming up out of Edom with the stains upon His garments and the step of the victor. He shall conquer. But when we say that, we are driven home to Him and Him alone as our religion. He, nothing else. I have no assurance that this Church, this form of worship, nay, even this minute faith which I believe in and which is very dear to me, — I have no assurance that this is to conquer all other churches, all other sects, and occupy the world. I feel very sure that Christ, before He attains His perfect victory, must throw His truth into new and completer forms than any it has yet assumed. I wait for those in perfect patience and without a fear, sure only of this one thing: that Christ will conquer, and in His victory, however it shall come, the old vision of the Hebrew prophet shall be stretched to cover the results of universal history, and so the whole world shall be saved in Him.

And now let us go on and look as far as we may into the method of this salvation; first for the world at large and then for the single soul, which of course is the point of infinitely the most importance to each of us. And in both let us follow the story of the old Jewish vision.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom?" Sin hangs on the borders of goodness everywhere, as just across the narrow Jordan valley Edom always lay threateningly upon the skirts of Palestine. How terribly constant it was. How it kept the people on a strain all the while. The moment that a Jew stepped across the border, the Edomites were on him. The moment a flock or beast of

his wandered too far, the enemy had seized him. If in the carelessness of a festival the Israelites left the border unguarded, the hated Edomites found it out and came swooping down just when the mirth ran highest and the sentinels were least careful. If a Jew's field of wheat was specially rich, the Edomite saw the green signal from his hill-top, and in the morning the field was bare. There was no rest, no safety. They had met the chosen people on their way into the promised land, and tried to keep them out; and now that they were safely in, there they always hovered, wild, implacable, and watchful. There could be no terms of compromise with them. They never slept. They saw the weak point in a moment; they struck it quick as lightning strikes. The constant dread, the nightmare, of Jewish history is this Edom lying there upon the border, like a lion crouched to spring. There cannot be one great fight, or one great war, and then the thing done forever. It is an endless fight with an undying enemy!

Edom upon the borders of Judah. We open any page of human history and what do we see? There is a higher life in man. Imperfect, full of mixture, just like that mottled history of Hebrewdom; yet still it is in human history what Judea was in the old world, — the spiritual, the upward, the religious element; something that believes in God and struggles after Him. Not a page can you open but its mark is there. Sometimes it is an aspiration after civilization, sometimes it is a doctrinal movement, sometimes it is a mystical piety that is developed; sometimes it is social; sometimes it is ascetic and purely individual; sometimes it is a Socrates, sometimes it is a St. Francis, sometimes it is a Luther

sometimes it is a Florence Nightingale. It is there in some shape always: this good among the evil, this power of God among the forces of men, this Judah in the midst of Asia. But always right on its border lies the hostile Edom, watchful, indefatigable, inexorable as the redoubtable old foe of the Jews. If progress falters a moment, the whole mass of obstructive ignorance is rolled upon it. If faith leaves a loop-hole undefended, the quick eye of Atheism sees it from its watch-tower and hurls its quick strength there. If goodness goes to sleep upon its arms, sleepless wickedness is across the valley, and the fields which it has taken months of toil to sow and ripen are swept off in a night. Tell me, is not this the impression of the world, of human life, that you get, whether you open the history of any century or unfold your morning newspaper? The record of a struggling charity is crowded by the story of the prison and the court. The world waits at the church door to catch the worshipper as he comes out. The good work of one century relaxes a moment for a breathing spell, and the next century comes in with its licentiousness or its superstition. Always it is the higher life pressed, watched, haunted by the lower; always it is Judah with Edom at its gates. No one great battle comes to settle it forever: it is an endless fight with an undying enemy.

So in the great world. How is it in these little worlds, these hearts which we are carrying about? You have your good, your spirituality, your better life; something that bears witness of God. In every man's heart there is a holy city, a Jerusalem, where, loud or muffled, in some voice from the altar or some light above the mercy-seat, the Heavenly Father bears testimony of His goodness and

tempts us to Himself. It may be very dim, but there it is in all of us. There it is in you. Hence in all men the struggle of that good with a surrounding evil; the parable of the old Asiatic geography forever wrought out into hot, terrible life. Do you not know it, my friend, this Edom of the lower life hanging upon the borders of the Judea which is the better life in you? You mean to be pure; you want to be pure; but some day you venture a mile across the border of impurity by some low jest or foul indulgence, and who is the foe that seizes you and bears you off captive into the heart of his detestable dominion, where he keeps you prisoner, whence you come out, at last, only with a tottering body and a corrupted soul? You mean to be true; but once your truth sleeps on its guard, and the Edomite is over the valley, and the lie is right in the very midst of your well-guarded truthfulness. You love humility; but some day your humility keeps a careless feast of self-confidence, and before you know it the shout of the invader pride is in your ears. How evil crowds you. You cannot fight it out at once and have it done. You go on quietly for days and think the enemy is dead. Just when you are safest there he is again, more alive than ever. I am trying to tell the story of each ordinary life. I am trying to make you think of that bad that lurks sleeplessly by the side of every good. When did you ever do a good thing with that pure, sweet, clear, strong, and open confidence with which they must do holy things who do them in angelic freedom on the open plains of heaven, where from bright horizon to horizon there is nothing but safety and God? We live a spiritual life like the life that our fathers used to live here in New England, who always took their guns

to church with them and smoothed down the graves of their beloved dead in the church-yard that the hostile and watchful Indians might not know how weak they were. It is the Saviour's word, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves;" only the sheep and the wolf are both within us: Judah, with Edom forever at its gate.

It is no wonder that just as Edom to the Jews became a great, terrible person, a giant lingering forever with hungry mouth and watchful eyes to seize them and devour them at every exposure, so to men getting this idea of the vigilance and malignity of sin, sin too should have appeared a terrible person, and the human mind should have most readily adopted the scripture image of the Satan, the personal Devil, always waiting, watching, hating. It is no wonder that sin, just like Edom, should have stood out as one undying foe. The change of generations never broke its power. It was the same enemy with which their fathers and their grandfathers and their great-grandfathers fought. The dreadful conflict between Judah and Edom lasted on from age to age, always the same. It was an immortal enemy, an eternal war.

And so when we look back over life, how dreary sometimes it seems. What are men doing in the fifth century, or the tenth, or the fifteenth? The old familiar strife and hatred and crime which we know so well, how they burst out upon us with their hoarse fury the moment that we force open those old rusty doors. The Barbarians are massacring and pillaging in Italy. The Roman Emperors are slaughtering their subjects and dying themselves by poison. The Inquisition is doing its horrible work in Spain. This in public life; and then if anywhere you lift a little corner of the merciful cover of ob-

livion that has fallen upon private life, the same old tumult of distress and wickedness is there: poverty, temptation, jealousy, hatred, deceit, making the little tragedies of those old homes, just as they turn the decent houses along our decent streets to-day into nests of unclean birds. All the while, bright, open, sights of goodness, generosity, truth, self-devotion, godliness; these are the Judahs; but all the while the Edoms close beside them, just as we see them now.

And if you turn back and look at the history of your own life, which sometimes seems to you as if it had lasted as long as all the history of all the ages put together, what was it that began to break on you as a boy of ten, when you first began to realize yourself? Was it not a wonder whether you were meant to be good or bad, so terribly, and so equally, as it seemed, the two powers were matched against each other in your life? How did your life look to you when you were a young man of twenty? If you had found that verse of St. Paul's, did it not tell the whole story when you heard him cry, "When I would do good, evil is present with me"? And when you were the full-grown strong man of forty, what then? Had not the strength of the enemy grown with your strength? Had not many a power of evil, which you used to make little of and think your life would shed, fastened itself close upon you and showed that it meant to stay, so that in some moods there still was no word but Paul's, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" So all along your life. The enemy shifts his point of attack, but he is always there. It gets to seem hopeless as the man gets old, and feeble compromises with this terrible insatiate

neighbor take the place of the young man's manly struggles to drive him out.

Here is where the hopelessness comes in, out of mere long experience. I think there is in every man's heart, down at the bottom, a conviction that the good is stronger than the bad; that the right is mightier than the wrong. I think that any being of pure human nature looking from outside at this strange mixture, this unnatural civil war that is going on forever, would say cheerfully, "Oh, it cannot last long, the good is so powerful that no evil can stand against it. Wait a few moments longer and you will see it cast the intruder out." I think every young man starts with some such cheerful, courageous confidence as this. It is only experience that undeceives us and discourages us. The intruder is not cast out. There he is, just as strong as he was yesterday, just as strong as he was ten years ago; nay, just as strong as when Abraham fought with him on the field of Mamre, or when the hermits struggled in vain to get the better of him in the caves on the banks of the Nile. There seems to be no reason why, unless some new force comes in, the struggle should not go on forever as inconclusively, as hopelessly as it has gone on so long; no reason why the two forces should not live together and fight together till death comes to separate them; nay, no reason why death should separate them; no reason why the two should not go down together striving into the dark river, and come out striving still upon the other side, and go on in eternal strife, perpetuating this human tragedy forever. This is the great discouraging burden of our experience of sin. "We look and there is none to help. We wonder that there is none to uphold." No power of salva-

tion comes out of the good half of the heart to conquer and to kill the bad. We grow not to expect to see the bad half conquered. Every morning we lift up our eyes, and there are the low black hill-tops across the narrow valley, with the black tents upon their sides, where Edom lies in wait. Who shall deliver us from the bad world and our bad selves?

And what then? It is time for the sunrise when the night gets as dark as this. It is time for the Saviour when the world and the soul have learnt their helplessness and sin. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?" Do you not see the parable now? Is it possible that this one that we see coming, this one on whose step, as He moves through history, the eyes of all the ages are fastened, — is it possible that He is the conqueror of the enemy and the Deliverer of the Soul? He comes out of the enemy's direction. The whole work of the Saviour has relation to and issues from the fact of sin. If there had been no sin there would have been no Saviour. "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He comes from the right direction, and He has an attractive majesty of movement as He first appears. This, as to the watcher on the hill-tops of Judea, so to the soul that longs for some solution of the spiritual problem, some release from the spiritual bondage, is the first aspect of the approaching Christ. He comes from the right way, and He seems strong. I suppose this is what draws the souls of men, long before they know the whole deep secret of the Christhood, to gather round Him and gaze on Him with a vague, wistful interest, — this sort of

sense that because He has taken on Himself to deal with their most hopeless difficulty, which is sin, and because He is so strong in His divinity, therefore, even although they cannot see just what He will do or how He will do it, still in Him, if there be hope at all, in Him their hope must be. And so they gather round Him as the crowds used to gather in the lanes of Palestine · so they come to church; so they look up into His face; so they turn over the pages of His Bible. Oh, if He could help us! Oh, if this could be the deliverer that we need!

Now let us look at what He says to His anxious questioner; what account of Himself He gives; what He has done to Edom; and especially what mean these blood-stains on His robes.

1. We ask Him, "Who is this?" and He replies. Hear His answer: "I that come in righteousness, mighty to save." That reassures us, and is good at the very outset. The Saviour comes in the strength of righteousness. Righteousness is at the bottom of all things. Righteousness is thorough. It is the very spirit of unsparing truth. Any reform or salvation of which the power is righteousness must go down to the very root of the trouble, must extenuate and cover over nothing; must expose and convict completely, in order that it may completely heal. And this is the power of the salvation of Christ. It makes no compromise between the good and the evil, between Judah and Edom. Edom must be destroyed, not parleyed with; sin must be beaten down and not conciliated; good must thrive by the defeat and not merely by the tolerance of evil. We cannot tell in some of those old wars what Edomitish feeling there may have been among the Jews; how many Jews there may have

been who had some connection with Edom, who rather liked the Edomites, and only asked of them that the two nations should live in peace together and not fight I cannot know — perhaps you do not know yourself — how much there may be in your heart which is so bound up with old sin that you do not want it destroyed completely, that you would have the sin and the goodness live on side by side if only they would not fight. It is the fighting and not the very presence of sin that troubles you. But this Saviour of ours is too thorough for that. He cannot help you unless you want Him to beat the old enemy down and kill him utterly. He will be the negotiator of no low compromise. He wants to set up the standard of absolute holiness in the midst of a nature all conquered and totally possessed by Him. Tell me, is there any difficulty here? Are you clinging to any sin that is so dear to you that you cannot give it up? Let the clear, inexorable claims of this Saviour of ours cut down deep and disclose your own heart to yourself, for He cannot save you unless He saves you in perfect righteousness.

2. But hear the next question. The questioner wonders, as the Saviour comes nearer, at the strange signs of battle and agony upon His robes. "Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" And the answer is, "I have trodden the wine-press;" "I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." Behold, it is no holiday monarch coming with a bloodless triumph. It has been no pageant of a day this strife with sin. The robes have trailed in the blood

The sword is dented with conflict. The power of God has struggled with the enemy and subdued him only in the agony of strife. My friends, far be it from me to undertake to read all the deep mystery that is in this picture. Only this I know is the burden and soul of it all, this truth, — that sin is a horrible, strong, positive thing, and that not even divinity grapples with him and subdues him except in strife and pain. What pain may mean to the Infinite and Divine, what difficulty may mean to Omnipotence, I cannot tell. Only I know that all that they could mean they meant here. This symbol of the blood, — and by and by, when we turn from the Old Testament to the New, from the prophecy to the fulfilment, we find that it was not only the enemy's blood, but His own blood too, that stained the victorious deliverer's robes, — this symbol of the blood bears this great truth, which has been the power of salvation to millions of hearts, and which must make this conqueror the Saviour of your heart too, the truth that only in self-sacrifice and suffering could even God conquer sin. Sin is never so dreadful as when we see the Saviour with that blood upon His garments. And the Saviour Himself, surely He is never so dear, never wins so utter and so tender a love, as when we see what it has cost Him to save us. Out of that love born of His suffering comes the new impulse after a holy life; and so when we stand at last purified by the power of grateful obedience, it shall be said of us, binding our holiness and escape from our sin close to our Lord's struggle with sin for us, that we have "washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

3 But He says something more. Not merely He has

conquered completely and conquered in suffering; He has conquered *alone*. As any one reads through the Gospels he feels how hopeless the attempt would be to tell of the loneliness of that life which Jesus lived. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. I looked and there was none to help. Therefore mine own arm brought salvation." He had friends, but we always feel how far off they stood from the deepest centre of His heart. He had disciples, but they never came into the inner circles of His self-knowledge. He had fellow-workers, but they only handed round the broken bread and fishes in the miracle, or ordered the guest chamber on the Passover night. They never came into the deepest work of His life. With the mysterious suffering that saved the world they had nothing to do. It was not only their cowardice, it was the necessary solitariness of the task to which He went, which caused that when the hands of sin were laid on Him to drag Him to the cross, "all His disciples forsook Him and fled." It was a work that He alone could do, that He must do alone. And is it not so always? Our brothers may help the work that Christ does in our souls in some of its details. They may bring the encouragement of their sympathetic Christian lives. They may lift up the hand and point with the finger to where the Saviour comes, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God. But in all the deep work of salvation itself, in all that impulse made up of perception of the perfect holiness and gratitude for forgiven sin which draws the soul straight and close to the divine heart, — in all that, no one has any part but the Lord Himself. He conquers sin He brings out victory in His open hand. From His

hand we take it by the power of prayer, and to Him alone we render thanks here and forever.

4. And yet once more. What was the fruit of this victory over Edom which the Seer of Israel discovered from his mountain-top? It set Israel free from continual harassing and fear, and gave her a chance to develop along the way that God had marked out for her. Freedom! That is the word. It built no cities; it sowed no fields; it only broke off the burden of that hostile presence and bade the chosen nation go free into its destiny. And so what is the fruit of the salvation that the divine Saviour brings to the souls of men? It does not finish them at once; it does not fill and stock their lives with heavenly richness in a moment. But it does just this. It sets them free; it takes off the load of sin; it gives us a new chance; it secures forgiveness, and says to the poor soul, that has been thinking there was no use of trying to stagger on with such a load, Go on; your burden is removed. Go on, go up to the home that you were made for, and the life in God.

And notice that this conqueror who comes, comes strong, — "travelling in the greatness of His strength." He has not left His might behind Him in the struggle He is all ready, with the same strength with which He conquered, to enter in and rule and educate the nation He has saved. And so the Saviour has not done all when He has forgiven you. By the same strength of love and patience which saved you upon Calvary, He will come in, if you will let Him, and train your saved life into perfectness of grace and glory.

So, my dear friend, if you are in earnest I stand and point to you the way of life. There is the Saviour

victorious for you. He has conquered sin, so that you need not be its servant any longer. Now let Him conquer you by His great love, and so let His victory be complete. For His first victory is all in vain for you and me, unless we thank Him for it, and take Him for our King, and dedicate our obedient lives to Him, and let Him lead us into all the holiness and happiness of His salvation here, and yet more hereafter.

IV.

KEEPING THE FAITH.

"I have kept the faith." — 2 Tim. iv. 7.

This was the satisfaction on which Paul's mind rested when he contemplated the close of his earthly work. It was almost done. The time of his departure was at hand. In this epistle he is almost delegating his mission, with the rich lessons of faith and prudence which it had taught him, to his favorite disciple; and as he looks back over his life, it is interesting to see where his mind rests, and to hear him say with such evident thankfulness and hopefulness, "I have kept the faith." What do men think of when they come to die? There must be a great difference in the way that different men look back from the margin upon the lives that they have finished, and in the various things on which they dwell with pleasure. The lowest kind of man may merely summon the ghosts of his past pleasures to cheat him with the illusion of a still present reality; may dream of doing over again those things which it was so pleasant once to do, and think what a good time he has had in the world. The man whose life has degenerated into mere routine and habit spends his old age in going over, even without pleasure, the monotonous occupations that have filled his days and the old captain drills his soldiers, and the old clerk adds up his columns, as they lie upon their dreary death-

beds. But higher men think higher things of their past lives. "I have been powerful; I have turned the currents, and made the world different." That is a great comfort for many a strong man to think of as he dies. "I have been useful; I have made the world better," is a much nobler satisfaction. "I have been honored I have made men regard and love me," is a pleasant thought which has made death harder and easier at once to many men; others have looked back into rich fields of knowledge through which their path has lain, and said rejoicingly and hopefully, "I have learned much;" while others have had no better comfort to lay to their hearts than merely, "I have made a great deal of money;" and not a few, weary of life, have laid down their heads to die with no profounder thought than just that it was over, that at last they had got through.

I think it may be interesting to see something of the position of one who, so different from all of these, looked back over his life and described his success, the aspect of his eventful career which it was most pleasant for him to look at, thus: "I have kept the faith." There are not a few of our present every-day questions which such a consideration will touch.

What does St. Paul mean, then, by the faith which he has kept? Is he rejoicing that he has been true to a certain scheme of doctrine, or that he has preserved a certain temper of soul and spiritual relationship to God? For the term "faith" is a very large one. There can be no doubt, I think, that he means both, and that the latter meaning is a very deep and important one, as we shall see. But this term, "the faith," did signify for him, beyond all doubt, a certain group of truths, all

bound together by their common unity of source and unity of purpose. Paul was too wise and profound not to keep this always in sight. That there must be intellectual conceptions as the base of strong, consistent, and effective feeling is a necessity which he continually recognizes; and the faith which he is thankful to have kept is, first of all, that truth which had been made known to him and to the Church by God. The first thing, then, that strikes us is that when Paul said that he had kept the faith, he evidently believed that there was a faith to keep. At the present day, many scholars of the New Testament, finding very different forms of statement in the epistles of St. Paul from those which fill the four Gospels, and seeming even to find in the epistles some doctrines which do not appear to them to be taught, even by implication, in the words of Christ, have been led to believe that St. Paul made his theology for himself; that with a strong and very original mind he shaped for himself the system of truth which then he taught to his disciples, and which thus has passed into the belief of the Christian Church. We hear much of a Pauline theology. It is a favorite idea. These doctrines are not Christ's, but Paul's, stamped with his peculiar character, and enforced only by his personal authority. I cannot but think that this text of ours, the dying utterance of the great apostle, proves very clearly that he had no such idea about his belief and teaching. To him the truth which he believed was not a doctrine which he had discovered, but the faith which he had kept. The faith was a body of truth given to him, which he had to hold and to use and to apply, but which he had not made and was not to improve. He knew nothing of a

Pauline theology. It was the word of Christ which he preached. It does not prove that there was not such a thing, but it does prove that he knew nothing of it. It existed without his consciousness, if it existed at all. What he meant to do, what he believed that he had done when he died, was not to think out a system which should rest upon such proof as he could bring, but merely to hold and to transmit a revelation which God had given him. Between these two every religious teacher must choose. There are schools of thought and there are revelations of God. Every teacher must be either a leader in the first or a messenger of the second. St. Paul considered himself, and boasted that he was, the latter. His own personality was there. It colored, but it did not create, his truth. Its weight pressed the seal of the faith down upon his disciples' hearts, but the device upon the seal itself was none of his, — was only God's. This was Paul's idea of himself and his work, and he certainly was clear-sighted, and understood both himself and his work pretty well.

We want, then, to consider the condition of one who, having thus learned and held a positive faith, continues to hold it, — holds it to the end. He keeps the faith. We need not confine our thought to St. Paul. An old man is dying, and as he lets go the things which are trivial and accidental to lay hold of what is essential and important to him, this is what comes to his mind with special satisfaction: "I have kept the faith." The things that he believed as a boy he has believed all along, in every stage of his growing manhood, and he is believing still. This continuous faith gives a unity to the life that has seen so many changes All besides is

altered, but that is the same. The boy with his round cheek and bright eye, the youth with his quick imagination, the young man with his romance of love, the strong mature man who ruled his great business, — you can find nothing of these in the feeble figure that lies before you, waiting for the end. He can scarcely recognize himself as having been either of these. But one strong cord of identity runs back, still unbroken, — he is the same believer that he has always been. He has kept the faith.

And this suggests that there may be both bad and good ways in which a man may utter these words of Paul. The bad ways are evident. There is a certain sort of identification with our opinions and beliefs which brings us in time to value them simply because they are ours, not for their own proved truth. And then there is the pride in mere firmness, which is proud of having held the same ground for a great many years, and refuses to desert it, not because the ground is good, but because the man is too obstinate to change. Pride and obstinacy! Where is the faithfulness to a good cause which the world has rightly honored, that has not had some lurking mixture of these subtle counterfeits? The very martyr at the stake must surely sometimes have known that nothing but the fire of his martyrdom could finally purge him perfectly of these, and leave only the good elements of persistent faith, which are devotion to the truth for its own essential value and a gradually-acquired thankfulness for the good that the truth in our long loyalty to it has done for us. It is these that make the persistency of belief reasonable and pure. It is the second of these — the gradual sense of what the truth we

hold has done for us, the relation which the absolute truth has acquired to our personal experience -- that makes our hold upon it stronger and tighter the longer that we hold it, the older that we grow.

For I think that the first condition of any permanen hold on any truth is this, that the truth itself should be live enough and large enough to open constantly and bring to every new condition through which we pass some new experience of itself. The truth that is narrow and partial we outgrow; only the truth that is broad and complete grows up with us and can be kept. The one is like the clothes of childhood that are cast aside; the other is like the live body that grows up with the growing soul and at each stage offers it a fit instrument for its work and a fit medium through which to receive its education. You must teach your children truth in part, but the partial truth you teach them must be true and so have in it the essential completeness of all truth, or else they will outgrow it and cast it off as hundreds of growing children do leave behind the whole well-meant but narrowly-conceived religion of their nurseries, as they pass out of the nursery-door into the world.

The true faith which a man has kept up to the end of his life must be one that has opened with his growth and constantly won new reality and color from his changing experience. The old man does believe what the child believed; but how different it is, though still the same. It is the field that once held the seed, now waving and rustling under the autumn wind with the harvest that it holds, yet all the time it has kept the corn. The joy of his life has richened his belief. His sorrow has deepened it. His doubts have sobered it. His enthusiasms have

fired it. His labor has purified it. This is the work that life does upon faith. This is the beauty of an old man's religion. His doctrines are like the house that he has lived in, rich with associations which make it certain that he will never move out of it. His doctrines have been illustrated and strengthened and endeared by the good help they have given to his life. And no doctrine that has not done this can be really held up to the end with any such vital grasp as will enable us to carry it with us through the river and enter with it into the new life beyond.

And again, is it not true that any belief which we really keep up to the end of life must at some time have become for us a personal conviction, resting upon evidence of its own? We get all our notions and especially our religious notions, at first, by mere tradition. Somebody tells us that this is true, and because we have no evidence that it is not, and because we know of nothing else to believe, we believe what we are told. But by and by the age of pure tradition passes. The capacity for evidence arrives; and what I claim is, that the man who does not win some personal conviction of the truth of what he holds cannot be truly said to hold it. He may still range himself under the banner of the belief that he was taught. When men ask him he may say, "That is my religion;" but if, when he is asked why he believes it, he can give no better answer than merely "I was taught so," he is not a real, he certainly is not a reliable, holder of the truth. The evidence may be of various kinds, external or internal, of argument or of experience. I do not say that every Christian must study books, but by some personal witness addressed to

that faculty which is the receptive faculty in him, — the intellect, the conscience, or the heart, — the truth must come with conviction or it never really is his truth. There is a time when the nature comes of age with reference to this whole matter of belief. If there be exceptions, if there be those who must live in the region of tradition all their days, they are to reasonable men what imbeciles and idiots, whom the law keeps all their lives in a condition of childhood and wardship, are to the young men whom it compels at a right age to take the responsibility of their own lives.

All this, of course, has nothing to do with St. Paul, because his faith, from the first, rested upon its own evidence. It did not come to him in childhood from other men, but in the full strength of his reasonable manhood straight from Christ Himself. He never passed through that middle region where tradition and conviction mix. His Christian life was like the natural life of Adam, born mature, without a childhood ; and so to some extent the lives of all the Apostles and early Christians must have been. But now almost every life must pass through that middle country, and many find it very boisterous and dark. It is the land where doubt hangs thick ; the time between the moonlight and the sunlight, which is the bleakest of the day. When I see what to some people seems so inconsistent, a man whose whole heart is clinging to a religion at which the head is sorely puzzled, who loves intensely what he yet cannot say that he believes, I think I see one whom God is leading through this foggy middle land. His love will help him to the evidence and meanwhile will hold him from falling till the evidence grows clear. Men, believers and unbelievers,

from their different points of view, distrust one who is in just this state, ask how he can love a truth which he cannot say that he believes is true, but after all this familiar experience, this condition in which some certainly are to whom I speak to-day, verifies the words of the old Church Father, which have always been felt to be true, that "human things must be known in order to be loved, while divine things, on the other hand, must be loved in order to be known."

I know, indeed, how much a merely traditional religion will inspire men to do. I know that for a faith which is not really theirs, but only what they call it, "their fathers' faith," men will dispute and argue, make friendships and break them, contribute money, undertake great labors, change the whole outward tenor of their life. I know that men will suffer for it. I am not sure but they will die to uphold a creed to which they were born, and with which their own character for firmness and consistency has become involved. All this a traditional faith can do. It can do every thing except one, and that it can never do. It can never feed a spiritual life and build a man up in holiness and grace. Before it can do that our fathers' faith must first by strong personal conviction become ours.

It is this feeling of the supreme importance of personal conviction which has led to a good many strange ideas about the religious education of children. You have heard people say, perhaps some of you have thought yourselves, that it was not right to give children any positive religious teaching; that you must not put into their minds what you hold to be the truth, but leave them by and by to gather for themselves the convictions which should

come to them when they are capable of being convinced. It is certainly very much like saying that you ought not to feed a child gratuitously in his earliest years, because the time will come when he will have to earn his own living and to feed himself. You feed him as a child just that you may bring him on, and make him ready by and by to feed himself. After that, to keep on feeding him would do him harm. And so you teach a child religious truth, using his faculty of trust in authority, only just in order that by and by he may search for himself and receive conviction of what is true. After that, to teach him to believe things on your word would do him harm. Any other way is blind and disloyal to the facts of life. Life is one in many, a unity in manifold diversity. The great purpose of life — the shaping of character by truth — is to be sought in all the life. There are no wasted hours. It must begin in the life's morning and run on till the nightfall comes. With the first opening of conscious existence, — nay, who can say how long before existence becomes conscious,— this process, the shaping of character by truth, begins. In each period of the changing life it may change its methods and yet be the same process still. In the early life the channel through which truth enters for its work is obedient trust. Later it is individual conviction; but he mangles the life, and loses its symmetry and unity, who breaks off either half or dishonors either channel; who either thinks there can be no religion till the mind can understand its grounds, or tries to keep the mature mind under the power of traditional ideas of which it has received no personal conviction.

And here I think that, rightly seen, the culture of our Church asserts its wisdom. The Church has in herself

the very doctrine of tradition. She teaches the child a faith that has the warrant of the ages, full of devotion and of love. She calls on him to believe doctrines of which he cannot be convinced as yet. The tradition, the he reditation of belief, the unity of the human history, are ideas very familiar to her, of which she constantly and beautifully makes use. And yet she does not disown her work of teaching and arguing and convincing. She cannot, and yet be true to her mission. She teaches the young with the voice of authority; she addresses the mature with the voice of reason. Let her give up the first function, and her assemblies would turn into mere societies of debate. Let her abandon the second, and they must be blighted with some doctrine of infallibility. Her baptism receives a child into the traditionary culture, and her commemorative Supper is an expression of the adult believer's personal conviction of the faith of Christ With such completeness, such constant sense of its unity, does the true Christian Church deal with the human life that her Master gives into her care.

And there is still another feeling, which goes even farther than this desire to exclude children from positive religious teaching. Some people seem to think that it is bad for any man to have definitely accepted a religious belief in which he proposes to live and die, which he never expects to change. It is the loose popular feeling against creeds. "Have your creeds," says, in substance, one of our teachers, "if you must, but build them like birds' nests, to be used only this year." Such a feeling would make it disreputable for any man to say, more than one year hence, "I have kept the faith." To say it at the close of a lifetime, for all the life, would

prove the man to be either insincere or blindly stupid. It is the violent protest against the deadness of traditional religion which would substitute for it the galvanic life of ever-altering whim. Surely there is something at least as blind in insisting upon change as in insisting upon permanence. Surely such a teaching utterly unfits the mind for the noble search after an absolute truth, making it believe either that there is no such thing or else that it is unattainable by man. Surely it must reject the whole idea of a revelation from God to man. Surely it must break away the solid ground on which alone men can stand to do their work for God or fellow-man. For, feel as we may how blindly men have often chosen their beliefs, and how ignorantly they have clung to them, still we must see that only from the strong footing of some truth which they believed, and deemed unchangeable, only from the solid ground of some clear creed, have men done good strong work in the world. Strong action can issue only from strong faith. Only out of certainty comes power. I do not think that men consider how much of all that is dearest to them about God and themselves and fellow-man they must abandon, unless they can believe that it is possible and profitable to come with the best light they have to some conclusion which shall be certainty to them, and then to count that settled; to keep that faith; not to be forever pulling up and examining that root-power of their lives, but, with the best cultivation they can give it, to make it blossom into every grace, and ripen into every fruit of good activity which it is capable of bearing.

It is not hard, perhaps, to see whence comes the feeling that we speak of. It seems to me to be aiming at this,

which men are always in danger of forgetting, that any truth large enough for one to hold for a lifetime must have newer and richer sides to show the fuller-grown nature than it could open to the novice who laid hold on it at first. He is, indeed, unwise, and almost certainly condemns himself to stunted growth, who says that every truth shall always seem to him in the future just as it has seemed to him in the past. If he changes, his relations to the most external truths must alter. If he grows, the revelations of God must seem to him greater, seen from a higher stand-point. This is the only true conservatism. Who is he that keeps most truly the principles of the fathers of our national government, but he who is forever on the watch to see in what new and unexpected way those principles must be applied to the full-grown republic which, if our fathers saw at all, they saw very far off? One who thoroughly holds the great truth of the Trinity would be sorry to think that he should ever cease to hold that sacred truth, but he would be sorry, too, to think that he would always hold it just as he holds it now, and that he never would see more deeply into its infinite meaning. He who holds the truth of the Atonement is sure that he will always hold it, but it will not always be as barren to him as now it sometimes seems. Some day, if he is better and more spiritual, its holy mystery will be to him, not less mysterious, but infinitely fuller of spiritual grace and strength than it is to-day. This is an expectation which does much for us. It lets progress into our lives and yet does not destroy their continuity. It repeats in our mental and spiritual natures what is so beautiful in our bodies, — the harmony of constant growth with unimpaired identity.

And this is an expectation which no mere line of death, no dark shadow of the grave, can limit. The "knowing in part" which belongs to this world passes on and is one with the "knowing even as also we are known" which is to come to us as we stand for an ageless eternity before the throne of God. Heaven is not to sweep our truths away, but only to turn them till we see their glory, to open them till we see their truth, and to unveil our eyes till for the first time we shall really see them. You teach your little child some simplest truth about the Saviour. And the child dies and goes to heaven, and knowledge comes into the glorified mind in unknown ways. God is its teacher. Love is its education. Unguessed works for the Father's glory develop and enrich it. It sees Christ and learns more and more of Him to all eternity, and yet to all eternity your child, looking back over the richness of the knowledge that has come, sees that it all is one with that first truth learned at your knee, and sums up all eternity in this one confession, this one tribute of thankfulness to God, — "I have kept the faith."

And now have we not reached some idea of the kind of faith which it is possible for a man to keep? What sort of a creed may one hold and expect to hold it always, live in it, die in it, and carry it even to the life beyond? In the first place, it must be a creed broad enough to allow the man to grow within it, to contain and to supply his ever-developing mind and character. It will not be a creed burdened with many details. It will consist of large truths and principles, capable of ever-varying applications to ever-varying life. So only can it be clear, strong, positive, and yet leave the soul free to grow within it, nay, feed the soul richly and minister to its growth. The men

of narrowest ideas are the most changeable or the most obstinate of men If their minds are active, they are changeable, always shifting one narrow position for another. If their minds are sluggish, they are obstinate, doggedly clinging to the splinter of truth on which they have been wrecked. But the true Christian believer says with David, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room;" and in the large truth where his Lord has put him, he abides, finding abundant space to live his life and grow his growth.

And the second characteristic of the faith that can be kept will be its evidence, its proved truth. It will not be a mere aggregation of chance opinions. The reason why a great many people seem to be always changing their faith is that they never really have any faith. They have indeed what they call a faith, and are often very positive about it. They have gathered together a number of opinions and fancies, often very ill-considered, which they say that they believe, using the deep and sacred word for a very superficial and frivolous action of their wills. They no more have a faith than the city vagrant has a home who sleeps upon a different doorstep every night. And yet he does sleep somewhere every night; and so these wanderers among the creeds at each given moment are believing something, although that something is forever altering. We do not properly believe what we only think. A thousand speculations come into our heads, and our minds dwell upon them, which are not to be therefore put into our creed, however plausible they seem. Our creed, our credo, anything which we call by such a sacred name, is not what we have thought, but what our Lord has told us. The

true creed must come down from above and not out from within. Have your opinions always, but do not bind yourself to them. Call your opinions your creed, and you will change it every week. Make your creed simply and broadly out of the revelation of God, and you may keep it to the end. This is the difference between the hundreds of long, detailed confessions of many differing sects, overloaded with the minute speculations of good men, which take in and dismiss their believers like the nightly lodgers of an eastern caravansary, and the short scriptural creed of the church universal, into which souls come seeking rest and strength, and live in it as in a home, and go no more out forever.

And then the third quality of a creed that a man may keep up to the end is that it is a creed capable of being turned into action. A mere speculation, however true it be, I think you never can be sure that the mind will hold. The faith which you keep must be a faith that demands obedience, and you can keep it only by obeying it. Are not both of these true? Those parts of religion which are purely speculative, if indeed such mere speculation is part of religion at all, are the parts in which men most often and most easily change. A hundred men change their views of abstract truth for one who alters his conviction of practical duty. The one may be changed and nothing suffers; a change in the other alters the whole life.

Look at two men holding the same truth, — the truth of the Trinity, for instance. To one it presents itself always as a doctrine to be learned, to the other as a law to be obeyed. One's view of it is always theoretical, the other's always practical. They both believe it, but one asserts it, demonstrates it, reasons about it. The other

lives by it. Which is the true believer? I can conceive of the first man losing his belief and yet going on much the same. Convince him with a specious argument and he will let it drop, and, except that he talks of it no longer, nobody will know the difference. But take the truth of the Divine Father, the Divine Saviour, the Divine Comforter, out of the other's life, and all is gone. Duty no longer has a zest, nor prayer an object, nor grief a consolation. The whole life falls to pieces when its truth is gone. Is not this last the man who will keep the faith? Practical obedience is the "deepness of earth" of the Lord's parable in which the sower's seed is caught and rooted, and held fast, and saved from the fowls of the wayside and the scorching sun of the stony places.

Breadth, Positive Evidence, Practicalness, — these, then, must be the characteristics of the creed which a man expects to live in and die in.

I have spoken, in illustration of what I have been saying, about the truth of the Trinity. Do you remember the Collect which our Church has appointed for Trinity Sunday? It bears upon our subject. "Almighty and Everlasting God," it prays, "who hast given unto us Thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech Thee that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen." Now what does that Collect pray for with its solemn and sonorous words? Does it simply ask God to make us obstinate and firm? Does it implore Him to keep away from our feeble reasons any strong arguments that might

convince us that the doctrine of the Trinity is not true? Is it the cry of cowardice, or of self-indulgent indolence that dreads to be disturbed? I think our study must have taught us something more than this. He who prays for an end prays for the necessary means. He who prays for the preservation of his faith in the Trinity prays that his faith in the Trinity may be such that it can be preserved. Then comes in all that we have said. He prays that his faith in the Trinity may be broad, not full of minute definitions of the method of the divine existence, which are impertinent and irreverent, and may prove untenable, but simply resting on the great fact of the divinity of Father, Son, and Spirit, which shall grow clearer and richer to him as he grows stronger under it. He prays that his Faith in the Trinity may have positive evidence, that it may rest on God's Word and not on his own opinion, and so again that all mere theories about it, which are only his own opinion, may be separated from the substance of his faith. He prays that his faith in the Trinity may be practical, continually making him strong and active in the manifold live duties that fill all his life. He prays for largeness of thought, for honesty and thoroughness of purpose, for earnestness of work, when he prays that God will keep him steadfast in the faith of the eternal Trinity. It is surely a prayer for man to pray and for God to hear.

Or take the constant exhortations that are made to people from the Christian pulpits to hold fast their faith. What do they mean? Are they mere pleas for obstinacy? Do they beg the people to close their ears to argument, to keep out of the way of light, to dread and run away from the honest man who comes to meet them

with a faith different from theirs, for fear that they should be converted and lose the faith of their fathers? Are thousands of ministers preaching doctrinal discourses this Sunday morning, — Romanist, Baptist, Methodist Unitarian, Episcopalian, — each preaching to his own congregation and begging them at all hazards to hold fast their faith, each busy building the fences of his sheep-fold a little higher and warning his flock of the danger of looking over? That were pitiful enough. I would, indeed, that ministers and people both understood what kind of faith alone it is that can be kept. He who exhorts to an end exhorts to the necessary means. He who exhorts men to keep their faith exhorts them to make their faith broad, solid, practical, so that it can be kept. Of that exhortation there cannot be too much. Let all ministers utter that exhortation and all people hear it, and speedily the "Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints," which we believe in, must be seen grandly issuing from this tumult of conflicting sects as out of a multitude of narrow, shallow, brawling mountain-streams issues by and by the broad, deep, and effective river. This is what we really preach, or ought to. This is what I preach to you to-day. Not, "Be obstinate, be quarrelsome, be fighters for your faith," but, "Be wide, be thorough, be workers in your faith, and so keep it to the end."

How clear it is, then, that St. Paul's words may mean very differently in the mouths of different men. When you find a man of eighty professing to believe still what he believed at twenty, it may signify something very bad or very good. It may mean death or life. It may mean that long ago he gave up thinking and studying and feeling, and is going along through life, and by and by

is going out of life, to God, with nothing but an old withered handful of grass and flowers, dead long since, which he still thinks precious, because they were fresh and live when he picked them sixty years ago. But he has held them in his hands instead of planting them into his life, and they are dead. He goes, saying, "I have kept the faith;" but he has no more kept it than the tomb that keeps the body keeps the man. But there is another old man who believes still his boyhood's creed. The things that were so dear to him at first have grown dearer, year by year. The joy and grief of life, like sunshine and rain, have worked together to ripen the well planted field. He said the creed this morning, and it was truer to him than on the day when he was confirmed. All life has illustrated it, and now as death draws near he sees how through death's window eternity casts into it light and meaning that it never had before. He will go, saying, "I have kept the faith," and hold it up really still green and vigorous before God; and as God takes it and plants it in the richer soil of the eternal life His words of benediction will descend, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in these few things, enter into my joy, and keep thy faith there still forever." Such be our constant saying of our creed, our steadfast keeping of the faith.

I said, when I began, that this meaning of the term, the faith, which made it signify a certain scheme of doctrine, was only a part of the meaning of St. Paul. I meant to speak of the other meaning, which I am not sure was not more prominent in his mind, the personal loyalty to Christ which had been the joy and law and inspiration of his life. But I have dwelt so long upon

the first meaning that I have left no time for the other I can only suggest it to you, and I ought not to omit it altogether. When Paul the aged said, "I have kept the faith," he was remembering how, from the time his Master called him, he had served that Master all his days. As he wrote it he must have seen Damascus and the open sky again. The voice of Jesus must have been once more in his ears. From that time on he had served and loved his Lord. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" had been the question of all his life.

His faith in Christ he had kept only by obedience to Christ. If it is impossible, as we have said, to keep a conviction, still more is it impossible to keep a feeling, a personal devotion, without setting it into action. You can keep a faith only as you keep a plant, by rooting it into your life and making it grow there. So it undergoes the changes that belong to growth and yet continues still the same. But this meaning of our text I can only point out to-day, and at some other time we may deal with it more fully.

It was a noble end certainly. Men lose their love and trust and hope, as they grow old. Here was a man who kept them all fresh to the last. Men cease to have strong convictions, and grow cynical or careless. Here was a man who believed more, and not less, as he knew more of God, and of himself, and of the world. His old age did not come creeping into port, a wreck, with broken masts and rudder gone, but full-sailed still, and strong for other voyages in other seas. We are sure that his was the old age God loves to see; that the careless and the hopeless and the faithless are the failures. To such men as Paul alone is God's promise to David fulfilled: "With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

V.

THE SOUL'S REFUGE IN GOD.

"Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." — PSALM xxxi. 20.

THESE are great words surely. They are an expression of David's confidence in God's power and will to hide His people in Himself. They are a promise of perfect security in God for the man who fears and trusts in Him. He is to be hid from "the pride of men," and from "the strife of tongues." I suppose that by these phrases we may understand the whole of that cruel and disturbing interference of one man's life with another's, which may take such an endless variety of forms. As it troubled David, it took the form of violent opposition, of malignant persecution; but it would limit our Bible far too much, if we thought that that was the only form of man's inhumanity to man from which it was promised that man might find refuge in his God. "From the pride of man," David says. Whenever the arrogance and selfishness of one man crowds and tramples upon the rights or the growth of another; whenever one man's despotic nature overrides the people about him and seems to leave them no chance, the crowded and wronged nature may flee to God and find a refuge there. And "the strife of tongues" — whenever the mere turmoil and con

fusion of the world become intolerable; whenever a man's own personal life and conscience are being swamped and lost in the ocean of debate and quarrel, for him, too, the life of God is open, and he may go and hide himself there and be safe from it all. It is a great promise, for as we go on in life are we not often conscious that instead of getting the best out of our fellow-men we are really getting the worst? Instead of the continual activity of their life around us feeding our life and nourishing it with its own vitality, this tumult of living, this strife of tongues, is always drowning and deadening and dissipating our personal faith and character and peace. Again I say, the form of the intrusion, the invasion of our lives, differs continually. We need not wait till some Saul is hunting us up and down the land before we take the Psalm of David to ourselves. To him it represented daily perplexity and fear. He was always insulted and in danger. He was always watching from the hill-tops to see whether his enemy was in sight. He was always listening to hear the voices of his enemies borne on the wind, and running like a frightened deer to hide himself in some dark ravine. We know nothing of all that. Our life is peaceable enough; but yet everywhere there is the arrogant presence of the pride of man, and the disturbing tumult of the strife of tongues. The abuse and fault-finding and frivolousness, the foolish quarrellings, this everlasting touching of one life upon another, this putting up of artificial standards and then watching to see how everybody meets them, this continual criticising and keeping account of another's conduct, all this waste of force and time that comes of the perfectly unmeaning strifes of social ambition, of business rivalry, of foolish

sensitiveness, into which we throw all our soul, and which is always tossing about in distress, and trying to drown the soul that we throw into it, — from these we need a refuge as strong as David needed from his enemies. Who of us can look back over his life and not feel that in some form or other these words, "the pride of man and the strife of tongues," describe forces which have been disturbing and hindering the peace and growth of his own character and life? Of how much of our best society they seem to be the exact description; of how many heartless houses filled with a poor pretence of social life, David's words tell the whole story. "The pride of man and the strife of tongues," the lack of humility, the lack of love, the lack of peace! To live in such a world, and yet to keep a soul in us at all, is very hard. We must have something under and beyond such a world to flee to to renew our life, to really recreate ourselves. That security and recreation of our life cannot come except in the source from which our life first came. We must go back to God. Let us speak to-day of this resort of the human soul to God when it feels its danger of being swamped and lost in the tumult of the world and the strife of tongues. The secrecy and safety of the life of the believer who is kept in God.

But first, before we speak of the refuge which God offers, let us see what man tries to do for himself. There are two different attitudes which almost all men take towards this tendency of the life about us to swallow up and drown our personality. It is strange to see how long before they come to middle age, almost all men, except the lowest and the highest, all men of strong character who have not reached some religious conception of

their true relations to the world, have either become defiant of the world, setting themselves in obtrusive independence against its claims, or else have tried in some way to withdraw themselves from it and let the world go its way, determined that they will not be sacrificed to its importunate demand. Surely we know both kinds of men. One man, seeing how the conventionalities of society and the tumult of the world are always trying to break him down, to compel him to fall into the mill of its routine, and to crush his personal character between its wheels, rebels, defies the world, becomes some kind of social outlaw, and does outrageous things to show that he will not be crushed, that he keeps, and means to keep, his independence and originality unbroken. Another man, equally weary and impatient with the world's endeavors to absorb him, draws himself back, shuts himself in, attempts some of those forms of hermit life which our civilization still leaves possible, and affects to give up all relations to a world whose life seems to him all emptiness and noise. We have all seen both kinds of men. Nay, who of us has not felt in himself the temptation to do both these things at different moments of his life. The impulse to be defiant and the impulse to withdraw ourselves, both come to us in different moods. We will dare the world to its face and tell it to do its worst, for we are not afraid of it with all its wretched prescriptions, and false standards, and endless clatter of gossiping criticism. That is one spirit. We will let the world go its way, and we will go ours. We will live a life of our own outside of the quarrels and contentions of men. That is the other spirit. We know them both, and we know that both are bad. We know that the first makes a man hard

and brutal, and the second makes a man selfish and self-conceited. We know good human material that has been ruined in each of these two ways, and so we want to beg any young man who seems to be getting into the power of either spirit, to stop and see if there is not something better than either, some nobler refuge than himself from "the pride of man and the strife of tongues."

It is good to see how God comes and offers Himself, just here, to the human soul. We do not see yet how He can help us, but instinctively we are sure that if He really is God, He must have some help to give us here. He says, "In the secret of my Presence I will hide you." Have you not seen often how jealous a father can be of the privileges of his own love? Would not any of you be angry if a child of yours went about asking other people for the bread which it was your place to provide for him, begging at other men's doors when your table was spread with his dinner? That is just the feeling with which, all through the Bible, God is always chiding men for going to others to ask, or for seeking in themselves that refuge and peace which it is the prerogative of His Fatherhood to bestow. It is one of the most touching presentations of the Deity. It is the one which Christ, the God incarnate, made most manifest. "How can you, my children, be in trouble and want," He says, "and not first of all, instantly, turn to your Father?" "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." It appeals to us very closely when we learn that God is even more jealous of His love than of His honor.

Christianity is the bringing of God to man, and of man to God. We shall go on then, after these general suggestions, to see how it is that in Christianity the

refuge of God is thrown wide open to men who are tired with, and who feel the danger of the world. Thousands of Christians have found the refuge who never asked the question, who simply were drawn into the open door by irresistible attraction; but if we can see how it is that Christianity gives us what we want it will make it more real, and so more useful to us. I think there is a threefold answer to our question. I think that the release and refuge of Christianity consists in the way it brings the soul first into communion with God, second into consciousness of itself, and third into a just value of the world. Let us look at each of these.

1. We will try first to understand how the soul finds refuge in communion with God. Of all the deep phrases in the Bible, where can we find one deeper or more beautiful than this of David in my text, "Thou wilt keep him in the secret of thy presence." The very words are full of peace before we hardly touch them to open their meaning. But their meaning is deeper the more we study it. They mean that when a man is spiritually conscious of the presence of God it secludes and separates him from every other presence. Can we understand that? You go into a room full of people, and the tumult of tongues is all about you. You are bewildered and distracted. In the ordinary language of society, which sometimes hits the truth of its own condition rightly, you "feel lost." You lose yourself in the presence of so many people. They all seem to take hold of you, and claim some part of you, whether they speak to you or not. You are lost in the crowd. You are merely part of the tumult. But by and by you meet your best friend there; somebody whose life is your life; somebody whom

you sincerely love and trust; somebody who thoroughly satisfies you, and, by the contact of his nature, makes your taste and brain and heart and conscience work at their very best. As you draw near to him it seems as if you drew away from all the other people. As he takes hold of you, he seems to claim you and they let you go. The worry and vexation of the crowd sink away as he begins to talk with you, and you understand one another. By and by you have forgotten that all those other men are talking around you. You have escaped from the strife of tongues. You are absorbed in him. He has hid you in the secret of his presence. Suppose that St. John should come and talk with you, or be at your side without a word in the midst of the wildest of our social Babels. Would he not bring his peace with him? Would you not let every one else go, and be alone with him, even in all the crowd? Would he not hide you in the secret of his presence? And now if it is possible, instead of your best friend, instead of the great disciple, for God Himself to be with you, so that His presence is real, so that He lets you understand His thoughts and lets you know that He understands yours, so that there is a true sympathy between you and Him, if mere vision and hearing are not necessary to the Divine company, and as close to you — nay, infinitely closer — than the men who crowd you round, and whose voices are in your ears, the unseen God is truly with you, what then? Can any tumult of those men distress you? Can their unfairness anger you? You hear them blaming you; you hear them praising you Does either make a tumult in your soul? They ask you flippant questions; they give you flippant advice. Does

either distress you? You are with them, and yet you are alone with Him. They parade their foolish vanities before you, and you hardly see them. It is as if a bright fly fluttered its impertinent finery between you and the west, when you were looking at a gorgeous sunset. He has blinded you to all besides Himself. He has "hid you in the secret of His presence from the pride of men."

This gives the very simplest notion of the meaning. Now we suppose that this becomes habitual, the constant temper and condition of a life. We suppose this friendly meeting with one who interests you thoroughly to pass into a friendship, pure, continual, devoted. If not in bodily presence, still in thought and sympathy, our friend is always with us. We always judge ourselves by his standard. We think what he would like or what he would condemn; we appeal even in his absence to his approbation. Is not the protection which we saw given to a man by his friend's company for an hour while they talked together, extended now over all his life. He has always a refuge from the cavils and fault-findings, the ridicule and misunderstanding of his fellows. There is one who understands him and who does not laugh at him. There is one whom if he pleases and satisfies, the rest may go their way. Across his life now may blow the most cruel winds of slander and they cannot touch him. His friend has hid him in the secret of his unseen presence, and there he grows up into fearlessness and conscientiousness and peace. This is the separating and liberating power of a truly great friendship. Happy is the young man to whom it is given early in life! happy because of the safety and growth which it brings to him

happy because of the manifold petty slaveries from which it frees him. The most perfect picture of such a hiding of one being in the presence of another is in the serenity of a child's life, held and comprehended, as it were, in the father's. How fearless a child is. How he goes among men looking them bravely in the face as if they could not harm him, so easily superior to the anxieties which are fretting away their lives. It is because his life rests so completely on his father's life that he is able to be so supremely independent of other people. The orphan child is timid and distrustful and servile. He has no anchor, and so every wave is a thing to fear and he runs before it. His poor little unprotected life is exposed without the blessed hiding of the secret of that presence which God mercifully closes around almost every life that it may grow its earliest growth in peace.

Do not these illustrations, then, at least suggest, — for it is almost impossible to tell many of the highest things except by mere suggestion, — do they not suggest how that which we saw occasional in the Christian's life may there, too, become constant, and a man live in such continual consciousness of God, such a constant desire to please Him, such a constant study of what will please Him: in a word, how a man may live so continually in God's presence that the presences of other men may be shut out, their vexing voices may not vex him? right in the midst of all the strife of voices there may be perfect peace with him. There is something very striking in seeing how this same feeling has attached to the event of these Christmas Days, the coming of God into the world's life when Christ was born. What is the whole idea of peace that is so clearly associated with that event

from the time that the angels sang of it to the shepherds. Is it not this same thought of the absorption of all the world in its present God? Is it not the promise that when that presence shall be perfectly, spiritually, realized, men shall be so taken up in serving Him that they shall have no time or wish to fight with one another? and in the farthest distance we can see no other hope of universal peace but that. This is the spiritual truth which lay at the bottom of that old idea, which is not wanting either in historical truth, the idea that at the time of the nativity there was a wonderfully wide-spread peace throughout the world, and that the Temple of War was shut. This is what Milton sings so splendidly: —

"No war or battle's sound
Was heard the world around,
The idle spear and shield were high up hung,
The hookéd chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood,
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
And kings sate still with awful eye
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was nigh."

It was the typical and prophetic keeping of the world secretly in God's pavilion from the strife of tongues.

When we seek for individual illustrations of what we are describing, I think we understand it perfectly by looking at our Lord's apostles. Those men who left their boats to follow Him must have heard many an angry and scornful word in their old haunts, along the streets of Bethsaida, and among the boatmen on the Lake, many a flippant discussion of their Master's character, many a contemptuous comment on their own delusion. Can you conceive of their minding it as they walked with Jesus? He hid them from it in the secret

of His presence. Not merely at the last when He came in upon them where the door was shut, and held out His scarred hands in benediction. Not only then, but during all His life with them, He really had been saying, "My peace I give unto you." We cannot picture to ourselves those first disciples living in Christ's presence and yet forever vexed and worried at the foolish things men said about Him. But with us modern disciples how different it is. We too believe in Jesus and try to live with Him. How is it that a flippant toss of skeptical smartness about Him, or a sneer at our folly in making Him our Master, lays hold of and stings us so, sends us home anxious, puzzled, and worried? We are not wholly hidden from the strife of tongues. It must be that we are not completely in the secret of His presence. We are not there constantly enough. There are moments, times when we are praying, times when in sorrow His sympathy is like life to us, when there is not the tongue so rude and bitter that it could ruffle the rest of our souls in Him; times when nothing that man could say would frighten or depress us. At such times we learn what it is to be thoroughly with Him, and understand what a guarded and safe life it must be to be hidden there always. Such times are like the Transfiguration, and we feel as Simon Peter felt.

2. This, then, is the directest meaning of our text. We have all sometimes felt, I think, a sense of safety and seclusion, as if a great thick door shut between us and the ordinary frets and misunderstandings of our life, when we appealed to the secret knowledge of one another that lay between our soul and God's in those great words of our Communion Collect: "Almighty God, unto

whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid." We have felt, when we said those words, as Noah must have felt when, in the phrase of Genesis, God "shut him in" to the Ark, and he heard the deluge roaring outside and was safe. This is what I wanted especially to speak of, but I mentioned two other elements in the work which Christianity does to secure the safety of the soul from the pride of man and the strife of tongues, besides this great work of making God more real, more really present to it. One of these was the work of a true Christian faith in developing and strengthening individuality in each of us. The reason why the talk of people about us, their pride and arrogance, their intrusion upon our life hurts us so, gives us so much pain, and does us so much harm, is the weakness of our own sense of personality. We go about exposed like those unhappy creatures that have no shell and are soft and open to wounds on every side. Take your ordinary man to whom no clear idea of himself has ever dawned, no notion of something specific that he is to do, something clear and peculiar that he is to be, and is not that poor creature, the sort of man whom you see by the hundred all around us, too plentiful for us to think how pitiable they really are, — is not he just the man to be the victim of the strife of tongues? With no strong personal convictions he is always listening anxiously to hear what the crowd says is right, or what society says is manly. He is forever trying to make out in the hubbub of voices who it is that the majority are cheering for. If he hears any of the great voices find fault with what he has done, it stabs him like a dagger. If he hears somebody idly laugh at what he calls his

creed it throws him off his unstable standing ground and he is floundering in skepticism. His weak jelly-like life is torn by everything it touches as it drifts. Now the first thing that a Christian faith does for such a man is to emphasize his individuality. I mean, of course, a real true Christian faith and not the conventional counterfeits of Christianity, which often deaden instead of quickening the sense of personality. A true Christian faith starts with the truth of a personal redemption and leads the man up to personal duties. It takes this poor indistinguishable atom and says to him: "God knows you. To Him you are not only one of the race; He knows you separately; He made you separately. His Son died for you, and there is in you that which, in some way which belongs to you alone, can glorify Him. What are you doing in this feeble unconscientious life? Have you never heard of such a thing as responsibility? Get up; repent. Come to God. Get the pattern of your life from Him, and then go about your work and be yourself." If the man is really a Christian he hears that summons, and it is the birth of a true personality, of the real sense of himself in him. It is a revelation. Behind him opens the long vista of God's care, back to the eternity in which God bore in His infinite knowledge the thought of such a life as his. Before him opens the destiny of a soul for which all through eternity its own character must freely decree its life. And then both past and future pour down their light on the present, and he sees what there is for him to be doing right here and now; and when he takes up his work and does it, he can no more be frightened out of it than the man to whom Jesus had given his bed to carry from Bethesda

up the street to his own house could have been scared by all the curious gaping of the crowd, and driven back to the dreary place under the porches where he had lain for thirty-eight long years. This is the way in which men come to do their own works. This is the way in which men come to take up unpopular tasks and do things which everybody about them misunderstands and depreciates, with a perfectly undisturbed complacency and quiet. There are duties lying around us undone now, — things which men call quixotic and laugh if anybody suggests that they may be done some day; but as sure as it is desirable that the thing should be done, some day a man will come to do it, a man who will say with Jesus, "For this cause was I born and for this cause came I into the world;" and that assurance will make it very easy for him to disregard the ridicule and stolid criticism that is sure to greet him when he comes and undertakes his task. It will be as if there had been dug up in some old land a broken arm of marble which would fit nothing and lay about neglected and despised; but some day or other men digging a little deeper found the statue that the arm belonged to, and immediately the statue claimed it, and it became intelligible and beautiful when it was set in its true place.

3. The third element of the freedom which Christianity gave to its servants was in the value that it taught them to place upon the talk of the world, upon what David calls the "strife of tongues." I have already suggested this, but it has one or two other points of view which seem to me helpful. I think one of the strangest things to a man who has really come to a knowledge and service of the Saviour is to look back to his own old life, and see

how superficial it appears. He used to be forever passing off-hand opinions about what people all around him did, and used to expect, in his easy way, that those opinions of his would really have some weight with the men upon whose conduct he made his comments. Now he sees how superficial all those judgments were. Now he sees how utterly destitute he was of any of that serious sympathy which is the only thing that can really justify us in forming judgments about one another, or giving one another advice. Nay, he sees more than this: he sees that he really cared very little when he pronounced those opinions in such judicial style, and that the most profoundly foolish thing that any neighbor of his, who had really considered thoughtfully a plan of action, could have done would have been to put his well-considered plan aside because of such cheap and thoughtless criticism as he poured out upon it. Now it seems to me that this sight of the superficialness of our own judgments of others, the way in which we have often pronounced solemn-sounding verdicts which really meant nothing, and uttered cheap ridicule which we should have despised the man if he had minded, gives us very often a startling sense of what a superficial thing this criticism is that comes to us from our brethren of which we make so much and to which we are always trimming our action. I am just going to do something which I have clearly made up my mind to do, and some friend passing by catches sight of me, standing with the tools all in my hands, and on a mere momentary impulse he cries out, "What a fool you are to do that!" and so passes on, and has forgotten me and my plan in a moment. And yet it is just that sort of taunt, or the fear of it, which has blighted many a sweet

and healthful impulse in the bud. I have only to think how often I have said such things, and meant nothing by them. I have only to remember how often I have seemed to think that my friend's doing a certain thing was the most ridiculous action in all the world, when really I was speaking only from the instant's whim, and cared very little whether he did it or not, to understand that this man's sneer means probably no more than mine meant, that he does not really care, and would, no doubt, be much surprised if he should know that his small jeer had turned me from my purpose. It is good for us often to know how superficial, how lightly made, how soon forgotten are the judgments of our brethren which sound so solemn, and which tyrannize over us so. Such a feeling sets us free, and makes us independent. Be sure that you may feel that about any cruel criticism that is hampering you, and may cast it aside and forget it and go your way. The man who made it has probably forgotten it long ago.

There is one other thing more helpful than this, and that is the way in which Christianity, by putting us into true relations to our fellow-men, saves us from falling into false relations to them. This seems to me to be the principle on which Christianity works for the redemption of society. If I wanted to save a young man from being a mere slave of other people's opinions, trying to win their applause, trying to escape their censure, I should be sure of succeeding if I could make him really go to work for those people's benefit, really desire to do them good, and really desire to avert harm from them. There is no escape from the slavery of other men like that which comes of the intelligent and earnest service of other men

Jesus said, "Call no man your master," and yet he said, "Let him that is chief among you be your servant." And, think of it! Who is the man that you have known who most completely served the community he lived in? Remember the man who in the magistrate's chair, or in the teacher's desk, in the council room, or in the court-room, or in the church, labored most earnestly for the people's good. Was not he the very man who was most independent of the people's whims? Was he not the last man to be softened by their applause, or vexed or frightened by their anger? Think of Paul. Did not his very toil for men's salvation lift him above, and make him indifferent to men's easy praise or blame? And I am sure of this, that any man of you who finds in himself an over-sensitiveness to what people say of him will find no escape from such a painful life so perfect as in setting himself busily to work to help those very people's best good in what way he can. The study of their wants will make him careless of their judgments. A healthy interest in them will crowd out the morbid interest which is always servilely hanging on their opinions and afraid of their sneers. Between the man who is afraid to go his own simple way, for fear that his brother will laugh at him, and that same man nobly resolving with Paul, that if meat cause his brother to offend he will eat no meat while the world stands, what a vast difference! What slavery in the one condition! What true servantship and freedom in the other! And if a true faith in Christ does indeed take all men up into His humanity, and, because we are His servants, make us the servants also, the willing servants, of all men, as His brethren, and for His sake; if when I am really Christ's, the man by my side whom I have

feared and flattered becomes changed into a brother of my Lord for whom I am to work as if I worked for Him, then does not Christianity save a man from the low servitude by introducing him into the higher service? Entering into Christ, I find there my brethren as His brethren; and while I devote myself to them as earnestly as I can, I cease to care for their idle criticisms and foolish quarrels. Once more He has hid me in His pavilion from the strife of tongues. And yet you see how very far this picture of Christian security is from easy self-indulgence and idle rest. It is all alive with work, only it is a work that is full of peace.

These are the elements, then, of the Christian's security. These are what Christ's religion does for us all to lift us up above and separate us from the pride of men and the strife of tongues. It does not take us away out of the world, but right here in the world it surrounds us with God's presence, it brings out our own personality, and it teaches us the value of the things we used to fear, so that we can despise them. Again I turn — as I have turned so often in describing any aspect or power of the Christian life — to see a perfect manifestation in the perfect Christian life of Christ. As we look over His career, how can we describe its serenity and composure except in these words: "God hid Him in the secret of His presence from the pride of man, and kept Him secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." How the strife of tongues raged about Him all his life! From the time when Herod and the scribes debated where He was to be born, that they might murder Him, down to the day when the people cried, "Crucify Him," and mocked Him as He hung upon the cross; in the days when the crowded synagogue

at Nazareth rose up and clamored for His blood; in the day when the Pharisees gathered around Him in the temple and poured their subtle questions fast upon Him to try to drive Him to a foolish word; in the day when the disciples came to a quarrel in His very sight about their poor ambition to be greatest: in these, and countless days like them, He lived right in the midst of the strife of tongues. But, close to His Father always, clear in His own duty always, and always trying to help men so earnestly that He was not capable of being provoked by them, He was completely apart from all the strife, He was hid in the secret of His Father's presence. We cannot but be struck with awe when we think what that phrase, whose beauty and significance we have partly understood as it applied to us, must have meant to Jesus. Our closest communion with God is so distant compared with the perfect oneness between Him and His Father. We run into the shelter of the divine life, just creep across the threshold where no trouble can pursue, and stand thankful and trembling there. We hide ourself behind the robes of the Eternal Mercy, and thence look out in an assurance, that is fearful still, upon the danger which cannot touch us there. But He, from the very heart of the Eternal Being, looks out on sin and sees its weakness, looks out on goodness and sees its strength. We cannot know His peace. It must have been so absolute. There must have been such a pity in His heart when they tormented Him, when they tied Him to a column and scourged Him, when they nailed Him to the cross at last, and all the while were looking to see Him give way and tremble, and all the while the soul which they thought they were reaching and torturing was far off,

beyond their reach, hid in the secret of God's presence, hid in God. It was as if men flung water at the stars and tried to put them out, and the stars shone on calmly and safely and took no notice of their persecutors, except to give them light.

And this brings up to us that verse of Paul's, which is the very verse we need to close with. He talks of the life that men might live, that some men do live, and he says, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." If we are really Christ's, then back into the very bosom of His Father where Christ is hid, there He will carry us. We too shall look out and be as calm and as independent as He is. The needs of men shall touch us just as keenly as they touch Him, but the sneers and strifes of men shall pass us by as they pass by Him and leave no mark on His unruffled life. It will be just as impossible, when that time comes, for us to work ourself into a passion about yesterday's gossip, as it was for Jesus to become a partisan in the quarrel about the undivided inheritance. And yet for us, just as for Him, this will not mean a cold and selfish separation from our brethren. We shall be infinitely closer to their real life when we separate ourself from their outside strifes and superficial pride, and know and love them truly by knowing and loving them in God.

This is the power and progress of true Christianity. It leads us into, it abounds in peace. It is a brave, vigorous peace, full of life, full of interest and work. It is a peace that means thoroughness, that refuses to waste its force and time in little superficial tumults which come to nothing, while there is so much real work to be done, so much real help to be given, and such a real life to be lived with God. That peace, His peace, may Jesus give to us all.

VI.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF GOD.

"Are the consolations of God small with thee?" — Job xv. 11.

If we could fully tell each other our thoughts of God, or if we could look with perfect clearness into one another's hearts, and see what thought of the great Father is lying there, no doubt the variety of our conceptions of Him would surprise us very much. He must appear so differently to His different children; and while this difference of our ideas of God indicates, no doubt, in part our blindness and half-sightedness, it indicates still more the many-sidedness of His great nature. He has a different side of Himself to show to each of us.

But this is not all. Not only to different men does God give different impressions of Himself, but on different parts of the same man's life He shines with very different lights and colors. Can we remember when we were children, and had our own thoughts of God, how very strange, how hard to grasp appeared the pictures of Him which seemed to give our elders such delight; the accounts which we read in grown-up people's books, or heard in the sermons of grown-up ministers? The truly live and growing Christian might mark the different stages of his advancing life by the different aspects which he saw of God. He might recognize his fifteenth year by one sort of revelation of the Fatherhood, and his twenty

fifth by another, and his fiftieth by another. It would be a noble biography, — the history of the sun's rising, and of the different stories that it told of itself, the different shadows that it cast, until its perfect noon. It may be that in eternity there shall be some such ageless condition as shall comprise the vision of all ages, and take in at once the whole character of God; but here the beauty of living lies largely in the way in which we are always coming in sight of new characteristics and capacities in Him.

I want to speak to-day about God as the Consoler. "Are the consolations of God small with thee?" And I have been led to these opening words by thinking how this side of God's life shows itself only to certain conditions of this life of ours. It is not for everybody. It is not for the very young and joyous. You would not go to a young man just bursting through the open doors of life, radiant with health, eager for work, with an infinite sense of vitality, and say, "Come, here is God, who consoles men. Give yourself to Him." To such a soul you have something else to say: "Here is God the strengthener. Here is the Setter of great tasks; the God who holds His crown of victory on the tops of high mountains up which His eager-hearted young heroes may climb to win it; the God who asks great sacrifices and who gives glorious rewards." That is what you would say, or what you ought to say, to the young strong man to whom you want to make God known. You say nothing about the God of repair, the God of consolation, the God who takes the broken life into His hands and mends it; nothing of that God yet. The time will come for that. And is there anything more touching and pathetic in the history of man than to see how absolutely, without excep

tion, the men and women who start out with only the need of tasks, of duties, of something which can call out their powers, and of the smile of God stimulating and encouraging them, — how they all come, one by one, certainly up to the place in life where they need consolation? I will tell you what it seems to me like. Have you ever seen, or perhaps made one of, a party of people who were going to explore some deep, dark cavern, — the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, or the Catacombs of Rome? They all stand out in the sunlight, and the attendants, who know the journey they are going to make, pass round among them and put into the hands of each a lighted candle. How useless it seems. How pale and colorless the little flame appears in the gorgeous flood of sunlight. But the procession moves along. One after another enters the dark cavern's mouth. One after another loses the splendor of daylight. In the hands of one after another the feeble candle-flame comes out bright in the darkness, and by and by they are all walking in the dark, holding fast their candles as if they were their very life; totally dependent now upon what seemed so useless half an hour ago. That seems to me to be a picture of the way in which God's promises of consolation, which we attach but very little meaning to at first, come out into beauty and value as we pass on into our lives. The nature begins to break somewhere. Perhaps the physical strength gives way first. Long before the courage of the heart or the mind's quick activity is dimmed, the knees refuse their office and the heart beats slow. It is an epoch in a man's life when he takes his first medicine to repair the ravages of time, the wear of the machine. Be-

fore he has taken food for support; now he takes medicine for repair. He has reached his need of consolation. Or perhaps it is the spirit that gives way before the body breaks. No matter in what order the new need arrives, there is something pathetic in the way in which it comes to everybody. The social life decays, or with one dreadful blow is dashed to pieces. The perfect trust we had in one another is dislodged. The courage goes out on its task and brings back no booty of success. The terrible disappointment in self, the consciousness of sin, bursts or creeps in upon us, and then the hands for the first time are reached out for consolation, and the great doors — which we have hardly noticed as we passed and repassed on this side of the Divine nature, they were shut so close, and we saw so little need of entering this way — are flung wide open to take the tired and disappointed creature in. It is as if we had sailed gayly all day up and down a glorious coast, rejoicing in the winds that swept around its headlands and caught our sails, thinking the bolder the coast the better, never asking whether there were a place of refuge anywhere; till at last the storm burst upon us, and then we never thought the coast so beautiful as when we saw her open an unexpected harbor, and take us into still water behind the rocks that we had been glorying in, out of the tempest's reach.

The world seems to have lived the same life, with the same succession of experiences in which each man lives. What is the old story of the book of Genesis but this, — the tale of how the world came to need, and, when it needed, found God the consoler? There was no talk of consolation in those walks beneath the trees, before the sin, when man and his Maker held mysterious converse

in ways which we with our blinded senses cannot know. How many ages slipped by so, who can tell? But by and by the catastrophe whose fruits are in all men's lives came, and how instantly a new power in God was touched. In all the anger of God in these first chapters of the Book of Life after the fall, we feel still that we have touched a before unmanifested power of His nature. With the first promise of repair, the first suggestion of a Redeemer, He has opened His power of consolation. It is as if we saw a father stoop, and for the first time pick up and set upon his feet the child who thus far had run strongly on and needed only to be guided. It gives us a new sight into the heart of his fatherhood; and so since Eden the world has rested, not merely on the helps and the commandments, but on the consolations of God.

When we think about the death of children, and of the other life on which they enter after they have left this world, it seems as if it must be an everlasting difference in that life for them, that they have never known what it is to be consoled by God. That they will be less happy no man can say; for who shall compare with one another the perfect happinesses of Heaven? But surely there must be something of God that has been shown to His venerable servant, who has been consoled a thousand times, whose life has been broken again and again, and again and again repaired by God; something that he knows of God which never can be known to the little child whose life, from its first beginning here to the very end of its eternity, never sinned or sorrowed, and so never needed repair or consolation.

And yet we cannot say how early in this life of ours the God of consolation may be needed, and may show

Himself to the needy soul. I would not seem to count out of my subject for to-day those of my people, the youngest, the happiest, the most hopeful, on whom I should be sorry any Sunday to turn my back and say, "There is nothing for you to-day." Perhaps their hearts will tell me that they have sorrows and disappointments of their own. And certainly they have, and it is the glory of God's consolations that they reach every grade and kind of need. The child with his sorrows has as much right to them as the man with his. Indeed, there is one view in which no trouble of man is great enough, and then there is another view in which no trouble of man is too small, to be worthy of touching the heart of God. And so let us count nobody out; let us all come together and try to find what God's consolations are; try to find how God consoles His people.

1. What I shall say will be good for nothing, will be mere theorizing, unless I simply draw out our own experience of God into description, and tell how He really has consoled us all. Let me say, then, first of all, that God is the consoler of man by the very fact of His existence. There is a class of passages in the Bible which to me seem mysteriously beautiful, and which appear to rest the peace of the human soul upon the mere fact of the existence of the larger life of God. Such is that verse of the forty-sixth Psalm, "Be still, and know that I am God." "Thou shalt know that I, the Lord, am," is the noble promise that comes again and again, full of reassurance. And when God's people, trampled, bruised, broken, trodden in the dust in Egypt, asked by Moses for the name of the God who had promised them His deliverance, it was a mere assertion of the awful and supreme existence

that was given in reply: "I AM hath sent me." No doubt in all such cases there is active character within the mere existence and coming out clearly through it and this character has its declared relations to the man who needs consoling, but still it is primarily the fact of existence. It is because God is that man is bidden to be at peace. And this is not hard to understand. If anybody has ever felt that his life, with its little woes, was easier to bear because there were great men living the same human life with him, he can understand it perfectly. The men of larger life of whom he knew never came near him, never touched his life, never spoke to him, perhaps never knew of his existence. It may be they were merely men whose lives he had read in books. For here is one of the greatest uses of really great history and biography, in their peace-giving and consoling power. It was not what the great men of the world had done. It was simply that they had existed. I pity the man who has never in his best moods felt his life consoled and comforted in its littleness by the larger lives that he could look at and know that they too were men, living in the same humanity with himself, only living in it so much more largely.

For so much of our need of consolation comes just in this way, from the littleness of our life, its pettiness and weariness insensibly transferring itself to all life, and making us skeptical about anything great or worth living for in life at all; and it is our rescue from this debilitating doubt that is the blessing which falls upon us when, leaving our own insignificance behind, we let our hearts rest with comfort on the mere fact that there are men of great, broad, generous, and healthy lives, — men like the greatest that we know.

Indeed the power of mere activity is often overrated. It is not what the best men do, but what they are, that constitutes their truest benefaction to their fellow-men. The things that men do get their chief value, after all, from the way in which they are able to show the existence of character which can comfort and help mankind. Certainly, in our own little sphere, it is not the most active people to whom we owe the most. Among the common people whom we know it is not necessarily those who are busiest, not those who, meteor-like, are ever on the rush after some visible change and work. It is the lives, like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we look and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage. It seems to me that there is reassurance here for many of us who seem to have no chance for active usefulness. We can do nothing for our fellow-men. But still it is good to know that we can be something for them; to know (and this we may know surely) that no man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good, without the world being better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness.

And now just so it is with God's life and the life of man. Here is an atheist. He is a thoughtful, conscientious man, but by failure after failure his life has been broken down into a low and hopeless tone. He has come to a terrible doubt whether there is any such thing as being good. He seems a mere sham to himself, and all his fellow-men are shams around him. Give what account he will of what men call righteousness, he has really lost the belief of absolute morality altogether. He is demor-

alized. He has fallen down into the wretched theories of expediency, and he hates himself for lying there, and yet he cannot get away. Does not that man need consolation? Poor fellow, with his broken wings and bewildered brain, where is the man that has any such need as he has to be taken up into some strong, wise arms, and to be refreshed, repaired, remoralized? And then suddenly or gradually it is made known to this man that there is a perfect God. Is that nothing to him? The God does not speak to him yet. He does not know that the God cares for him; not even that the God is aware of him. Only this, that the God is; that purity is not a delusion, and justice not a guess, for there is a perfectly pure, just Being; there is a righteous one. Is it not like the sunrising to that poor broken man? Is he not comforted? I do not believe that there is any darkest, deepest dungeon under any horrible old castle, most utterly and hopelessly out of the reach of sunlight, in which it would not bring a new pang to the heart of the poor wretch imprisoned there if he knew that the sun, which he never saw and never should see again, was gone out of the heavens. Although he lives utterly in the dark, the knowledge that there is sunlight helps him and he is not quite desperate. Although we live petty and foolish lives, the knowledge that there is greatness and wisdom, the knowledge that there is God, is a far greater and more constant consolation to us than we know.

2. But we must go a great deal farther than this. We begin with the knowledge of God's existence, and that consoles us when we are in perplexity and sorrow. Many and many a heart has entered into that knowledge, and found it the entrance into peace. But what

comes next? The sympathy of this same God whose existence is already real to us. It becomes known to us not merely that He is, but that He cares for us. Not merely His life, but His love, becomes a fact. Surely this is a great step forward. We had to convince ourselves perhaps that there was not something cold and distant in the thought of the divine existence as a source of human consolation. We know that that thought does wonderfully help those to whom it is very real, but it is not so easy to understand beforehand that it will help men to know of the great "I AM." But here there can be no doubt. Any one will say, "If I could only be sure that He, the God of all things, really cares for me; that when any sorrow comes to me, it strikes right at His heart, and He is sorry too, — if I could be sure of this, I do not know of anything I could not bear. What is there that I could not tolerate? Nay, what is there that I would not almost welcome, if it could by any violence break open a way by which God could come down to me and show me that perfect nature as my friend, my helper, thoughtful for my welfare and my woe?" Nor is this all mere selfishness. I rather like to think that the real reason why the sufferer rejoices in the sympathy of God is that thereby, through love, that dear and perfect nature after which he has struggled before is made completely known to him. Love is the translating medium. It is not merely that now that whose absolute existence he had comprehended already has become his; that he is reaping the benefit of that which before he had regarded only as absolutely being. It is not only that the sky, which hung in majesty and peace over the whole earth, at last has dropped its rain upon his garden. It is rather that

through this special love for him, the absolute and everlasting Deity has been made known to him. It is that through God's sympathy he knows God more intensely and more nearly, and so all the consolations of God's being have become more real to him.

I think that this is so. I think that any sensitive and thoughtful soul will feel the real distinction. And yet I do not think much of such distinctions. I know we do not gain, but rather lose, by any attempt to separate the elements of comfort that come to man's soul in the one complete round gift of the sympathy of God. Who shall attempt to describe the indescribable, and tell the power of sympathy? You go to see your friend on whom some great sorrow has fallen. You sit beside him. You look into his eyes. You say a few broken and faltering words. And then you go away disheartened. How entirely you have failed to do for him that which you went to do, that which you would have given the world to do. How you have seemed only to intrude on him with vulgar curiosity when you really longed to help him. How many times you have done this, and then how many times you have been afterwards surprised to find that you really did help him with that silent visit. My dear friends, never let the seeming worthlessness of sympathy make you keep back that sympathy of which, when men are suffering around you, your heart is full. Go and give it without asking yourself whether it is worth the while to give it. It is too sacred a thing for you to tell what it is worth. God, from whom it comes, sends it through you to His needy child. Do not ever let any low skepticism make you distrust it, but speak out what God has put it in your heart to speak to any sufferer. The sympathy of

God for man has just this same difficulty about it, if we try to analyze it. We cannot say that He has done anything for us. We cannot tell even of any thought that He has put into our minds. Merely He has been near us. He has known that we were in trouble and He has been sorry for us.

How do we learn of such a sympathy of God? How can we really come to believe that He knows our individual troubles, and sorrows for them with us? I think that this is a hard question for a great many people. The magnitude of the world, the multitudes of souls that God has made, perplexes many hearts, and makes it very hard for them to believe in personal, individual sympathy and care. More than from any abstract or scientific arguments about the universality of great laws, I think it is the bigness of the world, the millions upon millions of needy souls, that makes it hard for men to believe in the discriminating care and personal love of God for each. Our wider view across the world, the readiness with which we take in all the millions of our fellow-men, makes it harder for us. The Jew, shut up in his little nation, found it easier. In such perplexity what shall we do? I know only the most simple answers. In the first place, give free and bold play to those instincts of the heart which believe that the Creator must care for the creatures He has made, and that the only real effective care for them must be that which takes each of them into His love, and knowing it separately surrounds it with His separate sympathy. In the next place, open the heart to that same conviction as it has been profoundly pressed upon the hearts of multitudes of men everywhere. It is not inconceivable. It is only the special prominence of certain

ideas in our time which have made some people think it inconceivable that a personal God should care separately for every one of His million children. It is not inconceivable when such multitudes of men have conceived it, have rested their whole weight upon tha assurance, have run into the shelter of that certainty whenever the storm was too high and too strong for them. Above all, get the great spirit of the Bible. Read into the heart of the Book of Life until you are thoroughly possessed with its idea, — the idea which gives it its whole consistency and shape, the idea without which it would all drop to pieces, — that there is not one life which the Life Giver ever loses out of His sight; not one which sins so that He casts it away; not one which is not so near to Him that whatever touches it touches Him with sorrow or with joy. I know nothing which can secure a man from the sad skepticism about the personal sympathy of God, like a complete entrance into the atmosphere and spirit of the Bible, in which that sympathy is the first accepted fact of life.

3. By His existence and by His felt sympathy, then, God gives His consolations to the souls of those who need them. But more than this. When your friend is in trouble you first of all try to remind him, in some most unobtrusive way, that you are living and that you are his friend. Any little token of your life, a gift of flowers, or any trifle, will do that. Then you go and sit down by him, and without a word let him know not merely in general that you are his friend, but that you are very sorry for him in this special sorrow. But if you really respect him and care for his whole nature, you want to do something more than that. You want, in the kindest

and gentlest way, to get certain great consoling thoughts home to his bruised and broken heart. You are not satisfied until the reason, too, has found its consolation, and through its open doors comfort has spread through the part of his nature which is open to that access. And so it is with God. He, too, has His great truths, His ideas which He brings to the hearts He wishes to console. He does not treat His sufferers like children who are simply to be petted with soft words, and patted with soft hands till they forget their grief. He deals with them as men who are capable of knowing the meanings, the explanations, and the purposes of the troubles that come to them. And so He gives them His great truths of consolation. What are those truths? Education, spirituality, and immortality, — these seem to be the sum of them. You are in great distress. Your friend is gone. Your life is broken. Your soul is stunned. Is it possible that, sitting still or walking drearily about in your grief, God should make you know education or the law of growth, the endless principle of the sacrifice of a present for a better future; should reveal spirituality, and make you know the soul's value as far superior to anything that can concern the outer life; should open to you immortality, and show you the endlessness of His plans, so that what has seemed to your wretchedness to be complete and finished, should appear to be only just begun, and not ready to be judged of yet? Is there no consolation in these great thoughts? They do not take your sorrow off; and oh, my dear friend, whatever be your suffering, I beg you to learn first of all that not that, not to take your sorrow off, is what God means, but to put strength into you that you may carry it as the tired man, who has drunk the strength-giv

ing river, lifts up his burden by the river-bank and goes singing on his way. Be sure your sorrow is not giving you its best unless it makes you a more thoughtful man than you have ever been before, unless it opens to you ideas that have before been unfamiliar; mostly these three ideas, education, spirituality, immortality. Those ideas are the keys of all the mysteries of life, and so the gateways to consolation. And it is wonderful to see how, just as soon as a man is really crushed and sorrowful, God seems by every avenue to be offering those great ideas for that man's acceptance. He seems to write them on the sky, to whisper them from every movement of the commonest machinery of life, to fill books with them that never seemed to know anything of them before, to make the vacant house and the full grave declare them. You are a child of God whom He is training. You have a soul which is your true value. You are to live forever. Know these truths. By them triumph over the sorrow that He cannot take away, and be consoled.

4. But even this is not all. God consoles us by what He is, by what He feels for us, by what He teaches us. But all these, as I tell them over, seem to have something passive about them. They show God sitting as it were, and letting His life flow out in blessing upon the emptied life that needs Him. But there is hardly a sufferer who does not crave something more active, if we may say so. He wants to feel, at any rate he thinks how blessed it would be if he could feel, God doing something on his life, showing his sympathy by some strong act. "Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down," he cries; "touch the mountains and they shall smoke." And so he prays for God to help him, to do something positive

for him. What shall it be? Men are puzzled a good deal about prayer nowadays. I suppose a good many men have really stopped praying for some things which they used to pray for, and for some things which God very much wishes them to pray for still. But the prayer of men for what their souls will always count the greatest miracle of God, for spiritual regeneration, for newer, deeper, holier lives, that prayer has probably not been much affected by all the speculations about prayer. It is prayed just as often and as earnestly as ever, and so it will continue to be as long as men's souls continue to bear witness to the power and reality with which it is answered. "Create me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Men will keep on praying that so long as they believe there is a God, even if they have long ceased to pray for the changing of the wind and the stopping of the pestilence. And so when a man in trouble prays God to do something for him, this is the real miracle by which God stands ready to answer that man's prayer. He will not send an angel as He did to the women at the tomb, but He will come Himself and show His presence and His power by working the miracle of regeneration upon the soul that has cried out for Him. My dear friends, that is the consummate consolation; everything leads up to that. I see a poor creature sitting in sorrow. He catches sight of God's existence and he is helped. God sends him assurance of His sympathy, and a smile finds its way across the face that seemed all given up to sorrow, and looked as if it would never smile again. God teaches him His truth, and the disheartened heart remembers once more what it was to be brave and

strong. But then God comes and takes that soul, and positively, strongly lifts it up and away into the new life. He forgives the man for his sin, and He gives him the new heart. He lays the same strong hand on him that Christ laid upon the leper. He speaks the same sweet word to him that Christ spoke to the adulteress. He forgives him and converts him. He makes him a new man; and then, when the man stands up new, no longer crushed by his sorrow, and yet certainly, thank God, certainly, not having passed out of his sorrow! — but made a new man by the touch of God through his sorrow, to him, standing there with his new life before him, a new peace in his face, a new courage in his arm, a new love in his heart, — come to himself as the new man comes by the sacrifice of himself, — come to himself by having come to God, — when we look into his glowing face, and ask the old question that Eliphaz asked of Job, "Are the consolations of God small with thee?" How quick and sure his answer comes back: "No, very great!" Nay, he is able to take these great words of David which it is so terrible to hear people use when they do not mean them, and he fills them with meaning, as he says with serious joy, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

Are the consolations of God small with thee? His existence, His sympathy, His truth, His power. As I recount them all, it seems to me so great and beautiful to be the child of such a God. And pain and suffering grow holy when we think how through them the Father comes to His children. Let us not be cheated by mere theories to say that sorrow is not dreadful. Let us not

stand here in perfect health with our unbroken friendships and dare to say that sickness is not wearisome, and bereavement is not sad. We only mock the sufferers all round us when we say that. It is very cruel. But let us claim that if a man really is close to God there is a victory over the pain and a transfiguration of the sadness. "If a man is close to God." Can we say that and not remember how the Godhood and the manhood met in the Incarnation? Can we say that and not remember that all we have been saying was supremely realized when the Son of God was born and lived and died for us? God's being! Who could doubt it, as He walked the streets, and men saw God in His face? He brought it with Him across the threshold of the temple, and through the low doorway of the cottage of Bethany. God's pity! Who did not see it as He laid His hands upon the children's heads and looked down, from the Mount of Olives, on Jerusalem? God's truth! Who must not hear it speaking as He talks with Nicodemus, or preaches from the mountain? God's power! What more has it any need of proof, when the finger laid upon the hem of His garment gives the lost health back again, when the death upon the cross is the salvation of the world? All that there is consolatory in God, — being sympathy, truth, power, — Christ has set in the clearness and the splendor of His life.

And so if you want consolation you must come to Him. It is not a dead phrase. It was not dead when He spoke it first in Jerusalem, and said "Come to me." It was the very word of life. You must come to Him, know Him, love Him, serve Him. In His church and His service you

must take your place. Nay, let us not say "must." Our duties are always best stated as our privileges. You may come to Him, for He has said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." May we all come nearer and nearer to Him always, and find peace.

VII.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." — Rev. vii. 9, 10.

In the calendar of the Church to-day is set apart to be celebrated as All Saints' Day. Besides the special commemorations of particular saints, as St. Peter and St. John, one day is given to the commemoration of the great general idea of Sainthood. It seems to gather in all the multitude of the holy, in every age, and bids us think of their characters and follow in their steps. Its Collect prays that "we may so follow God's blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which He has prepared for those who unfeignedly love Him." This idea of one life following after and strengthening itself by another life which has gone before it seems to be the great idea of All Saints' Day, and to this I invite your study to-night. It opens wide subjects of religion and of life.

What is there in the world for each of us that would not be here if others had not lived before us, if we were the first generation that ever peopled this populous earth of ours? What are the legacies that the past sends down to us? Let us see. First, there are certain circumstances,

such as government and society, social improvements, cities, and railroads, and houses, all art, all the furniture and tools of life. All these things men have gradually, in the course of ages, invented and worked out, and they are permanent, and have come down to us in their accumulation. All that makes earth something else than a primeval wilderness when we step into it, — all this is the great bequest of circumstances. Then, besides these, there are certain truths; all the knowledge that man has ever won, of physics, of metaphysics, of morals, of religion, of beauty, — all this we have not to win over again for ourselves. The truths come down to us all found, and we have only to take them and use them. Certain circumstances then and certain truths. These are great legacies surely. But, beside these, there is another gift — of certain inspirations which we find waiting for us in the world. Men have left behind them not only the systems and structures that they built, and the truths that they discovered, but their examples, their enthusiasms, and their standards. The impulse and contagion of their work is waiting everywhere to breathe itself into ours. A thousand incentives to use the circumstances and to learn the truths, a thousand impulses to action press on the new-born life out of the past. The men who are gone seem to have left behind them in the world much of their power of vitality; and I suppose hardly a day passes in which we do not do some act, small or great, under this kind of inspiration from our predecessors, something that we should not have done, or should have done differently, if, even with all the machinery of living and all the truths that we know now, we had had no predecessors, had been the first tenants of our earth.

The power of this inspiration comes in various ways. In some degree it is the mere force of hereditation. Some tastes and tendencies we get in our very blood, just as we get the shape of our features or the color of our eyes. This of course confines the influence to a very narrow range. Then there is the distinct power of example. We see that other men have done certain things, and that they turned out well, and we say we will do the same. Our forefathers have set the step for the great journey of life; they have found out where the quagmires and where the solid ground is likeliest to lie, and we cannot do better than follow in their steps. But besides and above all these, they have set up certain ideals of character, not reducible to precise rules of action, with which we enter into sympathy, and to whose likeness our lives almost unconsciously attempt to shape themselves.

This power of influence may belong to all the past in general. Out of all the living that men have done what young man has not seen gather one complete and total image of what the human life should be? From all the multitude of failures and successes rises up the picture of a true, successful manhood, — the perfect man. That is our leader. Not in any special man, but generally, this ideal of manhood tempts and inspires and entices us to action.

Or yet again we see that power incorporate itself in some great man. Dead or alive, past or contemporary, some mighty character stands out and says, "Come, follow me;" and who can explain the subtle fascination that reaches everywhere, and lays hold of all kinds of men, and turns their lives out of their course to follow his course; to be with him in some sympathy of purpose,

and, if possible, to be like him in some similarity of nature? "As I take it," says Carlyle, "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here.' So all absorbing seems in his philosophy the leadership of the leaders.

We may go farther than this, and analyze the power of leadership that great men have. It is of three kinds. It may rest in either of three things: 1st. It may be in mere strength of personality. Mere strong individuality, showing itself in any act of prowess, attracts men and influences them. In this case the leader is what we call a hero, — a Charlemagne or Napoleon or Cæsar. Or, 2d. It may be in some truths that he teaches. The leader may lead men by the power of ideas, of superior knowledge. Then the leader is a teacher. Such leaders were Plato and Shakespeare and Bacon. Or, 3d, and above all, it may be in a certain thing which we call holiness, which we cannot define otherwise than that it is a larger and more manifest presence of God in the life of one man than other men have, — more sympathetic nearness to Divinity, which makes men feel that he, more than they, embodies the Divine Spirit and utters the Divine will; that he shows God to them. This is the leadership of the saint. These are the three: the hero, the teacher, and the saint. These are the leaders, the inspirers of men. To each of these we attach ourselves, and draw out strength from them; strength for action from the hero, strength for thought from the teacher, strength for piety and goodness from the saint.

We have reached then this distinctive definition of the saint. He is the man whose power comes of his holi-

ness, — of his godlikeness. It is a special kind of power; and it is the strongest kind of power where it can be brought to bear at all. It must be so because religion is the profoundest interest of our nature, and religious association and religious admiration lay mightier hold of us than any other. There is an attitude which man assumes toward God different from that which he can take toward any of his fellow-beings. Now in the hero man feels that there is something of God's power, but by no means, of necessity, any of God Himself. All power comes from God; but, horribly misused and perverted as it often is, no man can fall down in adoration before the violent destructiveness of strong personality as it shows itself in a Cæsar or an Attila. And in the teacher there is God's truth, because all truth is God's, but the teacher is only the glass through which it shines; at best the glass which condenses and applies its rays; and everybody feels that it is the light and not the glass which he must worship. But in the saint, in the embodiment of holiness among men, there is something more than the mere power or the mere truth of God. Here is something of God Himself, a real abiding presence of divinity; and the attitude which the observer takes towards Him has somewhat of the character with which he bows himself even before God. The hero demands astonished admiration; the teacher challenges obedient reverence; but the saint wins a sympathetic, loving awe.

It is not easy to make this plain in definitions, but when you call up your experience, I am sure that you must understand me. A purely good man, a holy man, a man whose life and nature you saw always luminous

with the presence of God in every thought and act and word, — have you never been conscious of some power in his presence; or if he were dead, of some power in the image of what he was that grew up in you as you read or heard about him, utterly unlike that which far greater men had over you. He was no hero and no teacher. You felt no wonder at his ability, and found no intellectual delight in what he told you, but he brought God close to you. Why, I know books vivid with such a life into which one steps as into the presence of God. I have seen rooms where such men or such women, weak and ignorant perhaps, were breathing out their long days of suffering, which were very Holies of Holies. They conducted divinity wonderfully. They made God real, and interpreted Him with something of the power of the incarnate deity of Christ.

I am anxious to connect our whole notion of sainthood with this idea of power. Saints, as we often think of them, are feeble, nerveless creatures, silly and effeminate, the mere soft padding of the universe. I would present true sainthood to you as the strong chain of God's presence in humanity running down through all history, and making of it a unity, giving it a large and massive strength able to bear great things and to do great things too. This unity which the line of sainthood gives to history is the great point that shows its strength. You go to your saint and find God working and manifest in him. He got near to God by some saint of his that went before him, or that stood beside him, in whom he saw the Divine presence. That saint again lighted his fire at some flame before him; and so the power of the sainthoods animates and fills the world. So holiness and

purity, and truth and patience, daring and tenderness, hope and faith, are kept constant and pervading things in our humanity. Each man has not to begin and work them out from the beginning for himself. So there is a church of God as well as souls of God in the earth. This is the truth of All Saints.

And in this truth we get the great corrective that we need of the continual tendency to solitariness and individuality in our religion. This church of all the saints is a great power in the world. Every true servant of God must belong with this mighty service of God; must get his strength through it, and contribute his strength into it. Ever from out the past, from the old saints who lived in other times, from Enoch, David, Paul, and John, Augustine, Jerome, Luther, Leighton, there comes down the power of God to us. Because they were full of it, we, by association with them, grow fuller of it than we could be by ourselves. Our reverence and love for them becomes akin to, and bears like fruit in us with our reverence and love for God. Our faith mounts up with their exultant prayers. Our weak devotion, tired and drooping, rests against the strong pillars of their certain trust. Their quick sight teaches our half-opened eyes the way to look toward the light that shall unseal them wholly. How large a part of our godward life is travelled not by clear landmarks seen far off in the promised land, but as travellers climb a mountain peak, by putting footstep after footstep slowly and patiently into the prints which some one going before us, with keener sight, with stronger nerves, tied to us by the cord of saintly sympathy, has planted deep into the pathless snow of the bleak distance that stretches up between humanity

and God. Take away holy example and the inspiration of holy men (and that I would call destroying the church, not the breaking to pieces of any external system, for that is the true apostolical saintly succession, the tactual succession of heart touching heart with fire); take that away and you would depopulate heaven. Only one bold, supreme soul here and there would still be able to scale the height alone, and stand triumphant in the glorious presence of God. And who can say what distortion and lack of symmetry there might be in its eternal character by the solitariness of its struggles. So we ascend by one another. We live by one another's blessings, as we die by one another's cursings. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. We live and die not only to God but to each other.

And yet remember what we said about these saints who help us on our way. They were incorporations, not of the power, nor of the truth, but of the spirit or the character of God. Not heroes nor teachers, but distinctly saints. Now in God Himself all three, power and truth and character, must go together; all must be perfect in their perfect union in Him. And so they will, to some extent, in the saint, who is God's copy; but not entirely. The saint is God's child; and the child has the father's character, but not his truth or his power. You are interested and inspired very likely when you see the child of a very great man showing his father's qualities, interpreting his father to you, bringing you near to him; but you do not look to see the child of Cæsar conquering another empire, or the child of Shakespeare writing another Hamlet. You are surprised if he has not his father's character. You are surprised if he has his father's talent or his father's knowledge.

This is important. The Romanist thinks that his saints must have some power of miracle. It is not enough for him that they were good godlike men and women, manifesting God in daily duty and the patient devotion of holy lives. His Blessed Virgin, and St. Peter and St. James, St. Joseph, St. Catharine, St. Jerome, and the rest, must heal the sick, and raise the dead, and tread on serpents, and wield the power of divinity over the forces of nature, and help men in their business, or they are no saints. Mere holiness is not enough. God's power in their acts, as well as God Himself in their characters, seems to him necessary. And so we are overwhelmed with the torrent of stories of miracles of the saints, hung on improbably onto their lives, and hiding from us with their great misty halo of uncertainty the really certain holiness and nobleness of the great men and women who adorn the books of sainthood. And so he who believes those stories easily pauses at such near and convenient repositories of power, between himself and God, asks his blessing of his familiar saint, not of his unfamiliar deity, and so is really not helped nearer to God, but kept farther away from God by his saints. This is the practical working.

And not only among Romanists, but among some schools of Protestants, especially, perhaps, in our own church, there is another error of essentially the same character as this, that is always hampering the freedom of Christian life and the progress of Christian truth. We have seen that godliness of character ought not necessarily to be supposed to imply the possession of divine miraculous power. But surely it is just as true that it does not imply any sort of miraculous di- ine knowledge,

or wisdom either. That poor saintly woman by whose hovel bedside you go and sit, and rise up edified and strengthened, feeling that you have been very near to God, it matters nothing to you that she is very ignorant, that you would not value her opinion on any knotty point of history, or doctrine, or economy. What have you to do with those things, sitting there by her. The head monopolizes life. It has more than its share of treasuries to draw on, and fountains to drink from, in the world. It is the poor heart, so often half-starved and thirsty, that is getting sweet refreshment as you sit and draw it from the rich godliness of the suffering saint. Now make this wider. Back in the history of the Christian Church runs the long pedigree of saintship which I have tried to paint before you. Age after age the qualities of God have been taken up into the holy lives of men; and honoring this truth of the perpetuated grace and holiness of the continual church, we call those great religious men who stand out in the several ages high above all the rest, the Fathers. There are the fathers of Primitive Christianity, the fathers of the Reformation, the fathers of the English Church, the fathers of our own American Episcopacy. We hear much in these days about the Fathers and their authority. There are some men who would coördinate their teaching with that of the New Testament, with Christ's and the Apostles'. But if what we have said be true, is it not evident that however deeply we may reverence, however we may be illuminated by the sweet or splendid piety of those old men of God, there is no true presumption of any infallible wisdom, or any inspired knowledge in them, that should make either their views of truth, or their laws of church regulation,

the necessary standards for our thought and action. Wise men, wonderful men, many of them most certainly were; and on the other hand many of them always, and almost all of them sometimes, wrote and talked puerilities and blunders, which are not strange when we consider the times in which they lived, but which compel us to believe that their reliableness as teachers must be tested by the ordinary laws by which we try all our teachers, and that they are to be believed only as they convince our reason, or conform to that higher authority of revelation which both they and we allow. From the substance of a doctrine down to the size of a diocese, or the color of a stole, men quote the Fathers of Nice and Alexandria and Rome. Others will tell us that just in this shape the truth of justification must be always held because Luther or Calvin taught it so. The Prayer-book of the English Reformers, and its adaptation by the first bishops of our own church, is clothed, by some people, with almost superstitious sanctity, as if to alter any jot or tittle in it were a sacrilege. This is not well. These men are patterns for our piety, not tyrants of our thought or action. They made mistakes in ritual and government and doctrine. And the old times in which they lived asked of them shapes of outward Christian life and church organization, which the same live religion that made them create them orders us to change. It is their holy temper that consecrates them to us. It is their godliness that makes them great. In that runs the true chain of sainthood, linking the ages together and making the eternal unity of the church. Oh, there have been great souls behind us, brethren. The stream of truth may widen as the years roll on, and sweep us into harbors of thought and knowl-

edge of which they never dreamed. We may unlearn things that they thought were certainties, and take for sure truths what they would have turned from as the wildest dreams. On the one rock we may build structures of another shape from theirs. But does that make us greater than they were? Does it authorize us to be contemptuous and cast them off as useless? Has your mere schoolboy a right to say that he is greater than Plato, because he lives in a house full of luxuries, and can tell you of opinions in which Plato was mistaken, and knows facts that Plato never dreamed of. Put them in their true place, and the Fathers are mighty. We bow before them as they stand through history and win their blessing. Let them not be made despots over us, and I will praise them with the loudest. A poor extemporized thing the church would be without them. If we learn more than they knew, we still owe it all to them, for we learn it all in the directions which their devout and faithful lives first indicated. We learn of God when we look steadily at them, and thank Him for the blessing of the saints and fathers.

I have been anxious to point this out, this absence of power of miracle, or of authority in truth in the saints of the Christian Church, because we must have some doctrine of the sainthood which shall not for a moment dim or distort the leadership and perfect headship of the christian, and the church which rests in Christ alone. He must do all our great works for us, and teach us all our great lessons. Better that the whole calendar were swept away and every saint forgotten, than that one of them should take anything from that perfect prerogative of saviorship which is the Saviour's own. But this need not be. Christ, as He leads us on to higher things, may

still strengthen us with the company of those who have the same road to travel, and are walking it in the same strength. It surely does not lessen Christ to me as the supporter of my sickness, when on my sick-bed I call up the image of some sufferer of old, and see him patient in the power of a divine sympathy, which then I reach out and cry after with all the more certain assurance for myself. Christ is more utterly my sole resource in strong temptation, the only Being I can flee to, when I see strong men of the saintly histories turned into weakness before the power of evil, and fleeing in desperation to that same Christ, to be restrengthened with a higher power than the old. There is a use of the saints that can make Christ nearer, clearer, dearer to our souls. They may be like a mere atmosphere between our souls and Him, whose every particle, filled with Him, has passed on his life to the next particle, and so at last sent him down to us pure, as He is, uncolored with its own blueness, the "light that lighteth every man," lighting us all the more brightly because it has lighted them.

We have been speaking almost altogether of the saints of old times. But our subject is "All Saints." The question comes then, are there no saints to-day? Has the race run out, or is there such a thing as a modern saint? Yes, surely, I reply. If sainthood means what we have said, the indwelling, the manifest indwelling of God in man, then there must be many a very saintly saint in these late days of ours. We can well conceive indeed that there may be fewer supreme preëminent saints, fewer outreaching pinnacles of grace in the long ranges of spiritual life. There does seem to be something arbitrary in our modern canonizations, both Protestant and Romish,

some absence of reason why this or that one should be chosen for the aureole or the biography, more than a multitude of others who seemed quite as manifestly full of God as he. This is conceivable. As all civilization and human culture advances, great men become less common and less marked. As the general level rises the mountain-tops are less prominent. And so as the presence of God in humanity becomes more visible everywhere (and in spite of all men say, I believe there never has been a time whose large spiritual level was so high as that in which we thank God that we live), as spirituality grows more common the sainthoods stand out less marked from their surroundings. It is conceivable that a time of such general elevation may come, in this world or another, that the promontories shall be all lost in the lofty tableland of millennial goodness and nobleness.

Still there are saints enough if we only know how to find them. The result of what I have just spoken of will be that all saintliness now will have less a miraculous and strange appearance, will far more blend in with and manifest itself through the channels of the most familiar life. The old idea of sainthood demanded miracles of those whom it admitted to its calendars. The Church of Rome still makes the same demand. All makes the sainthood an exceptional, irregular, unusual thing. We cannot surely think that this idea has anything like the real nobleness of that other which conceives that the highest holiness will not work miracles, but only do its duty; will busy itself, not with unusual, but with familiar things, and make itself manifest, not in prodigies, but in the ordinary duties of a common life.

Indeed to ask for miracles, as exhibitors of charac

ter, is always the sign of feeble insight and feeble faith. The true father does not ask his son for prodigies of submission to approve his filial loyalty. He sees it in the hourly look and walk of obedience. The headstrong Pharaoh could not see God until He showed Himself in the ten plagues. The loving David saw God in the quiet guidance of his daily life. "By Thee have I been holden up from the womb," he says. I have been struck by a fine instance of this discernment of God, not in miracles, but in the ordinary course of providence, which occurs in the history of Martin Luther. It was a time when things were going very hard with him, a time when all the human props of the Reformation seemed ready to fall away. It was then that "I saw not long since," cried Luther, "a sign in the heavens." Then you begin to listen for some startling prodigy. A falling star, a pillar of fire, a blazing cross held out against the sky. Certainly some miracle is coming. But hear what does come. "I was looking out of my window at night, and beheld the stars, and the whole majestic vault of God, held up without my being able to see the pillars on which the Master had caused it to rest. Men fear that the sky may fall. Poor fools! Is not God always there?" That is all. That is his "sign in the heavens." It is a miracle; but only that old miracle that has been shown nightly since the heavens and the stars were made, that you and I will see when we go out to-night. The eye that sees God there is more clear and more blessed than the eye that has to be scared into seeing Him by lightnings and by firebrands. It is not, if we understand it rightly, a sign of decreasing, but of increasing spirituality, that miracles have ceased. And so it is a truer discrimination

that recognizes the presences of God in men, the saints that are in the world, not by the miracles they work but by the miracles they are, by the way in which they bring the grace of God to bear on the simple duties of the household and the street. The sainthoods of the fireside and of the market-place — they wear no glory round their heads; they do their duties in the strength of God; they have their martyrdoms and win their palms, and though they get into no calendars, they leave a benediction and a force behind them on the earth when they go up to heaven.

Every time that we say our Creed, to-night, for instance, we profess that we "believe in the communion of saints." I hope that all which we have said has made it a little clearer to us what is the meaning of that article of faith. All the souls, everywhere, in whom God dwells, dwell together in virtue of that occupation. They may be separated very far. They may not know each other's tongue. The Divine presence in them may take the most utterly various forms of expression. Their works in life may be entirely distinct. All these are things external. They live together as they both abide in God. The symbols of that inner life are many; the multitudinous life itself is one. I have preached of the saint as leader. This article of the Creed brings in a higher thought, — the saint as brother and companion. It is a higher aspect of the same thought, rather, for the two are really one. The highest leadership does not stand above its flock to rule them. It comes down among them, and is one of them. And the completest brotherhood is not mere company; it aids and feeds and ministers to its brethren.

It is leadership also. So that the leader is the brother, and the brother is the leader, and saint is both to saint. The communion of saints is a mutual ministry of saints. It is a noble thing to think of. Here, and in the antipodes here, and in regions of thought and culture utterly estranged from ours; here, and in the lordliest cathedral and the lowliest camp-meeting; here, and in sick-rooms, in prisons, in poor-houses, in palaces, the great communion reaches. The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints! Wherever men are praying, loving, trusting, seeking and finding God, it is a true body with all its ministries of part to part. Nay, shall we stop at that poor line, the grave, which all our Christianity is always trying to wipe out and make nothing of, and which we always insist on widening into a great gulf? Shall we not stretch our thought beyond, and feel the life-blood of this holy church, this living body of Christ, pulsing out into the saints who are living there, and coming back throbbing with tidings of their glorious and sympathetic life. It is the very power of this truth of ours to-day, that it lays hold on immortality. It leaps the gulf of death. David and Peter, part of the same body with us, already prophesy to us, the more sluggish and tardy members, of the great things that are before us, the final bright outcome of the struggle in which we are still so blindly toiling on; as the eager eyes send messages down to the slow laboring feet, of the green, soft fields before, on which they are already feasting, and on which, after a little more plodding toil, the tired feet shall rest. What we know of Christ becomes in some measure the property of all.

Angels, and living saints, and dead,
But one communion make:
All join in Christ, their vital head,
And of His love partake.

The true church, the only church worth living in or fighting for, is this communion of saints. It is the answer to the Saviour's prayer, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they all may be one in us." Oh, when I think of what the church really is meaning all this time, — the fellowship of faith and goodness everywhere, — it does make me indignant to hear how some men talk of it in little narrow mechanical phrases, and think that they alone do it worthy honor.

And now do you ask me how can one enter into this society? "I would not stand outside of all this organism of holiness and truth. I would be in, as well as believe in, the 'communion of saints.'" I have spoken poorly, indeed, unless you see the answer. The saint is he in whom God dwells. But God comes to dwell in men, by His Holy Spirit, in the great work of the personal regeneration. Do you ask then, "How shall I enter in to the company of saints?" You must yield yourself to that power of God which from your birth up until now has been waiting at your heart-doors, to enter in and fill your nature with itself. You have kept your heart full of selfishness. You must turn it all out, and take God in, and straightway, living by Him and for Him, you are one with the living saints and dead. Oh, wondrous moment of conversion! Out to the farthest limits of the perfect body there runs the tidings of a new member added to the unity. Is it strange that "there is joy in heaven?" This doctrine of the communion of the saints alone lets us realize that

text. The saints of old know that the body of their Lord, the universal church, is nearer its completion. The saints who stand around feel their own spiritual life move quicker at the access of this new vitality. The whole body knows of it and rejoices with intenser life. The man himself, knowing Christ for his, knows all Christ's brethren and followers his fellows in the holy unity of faith. Oh, wondrous moment of regeneration! Our church rites, our baptisms and confirmations, what we call "joining the church," feebly tries to typify the great event. If the rites seem to you cold and hollow, and do not attract you, is there nothing in this great spiritual event to stir your heart, and make you say, "I, too, will be a Christian."

And now ought there not to be a power to hold men back from sin in this great truth of all saints? The world seems very wrong and wicked. Vice has the upper hand. All is apparently drifting on from worse to worse. Sin has it all its own way. So it seems sometimes, and the young man says, "What is the use of fighting against the current? I never can do better. What is the use of trying? I must yield at last." And just then, what if the clouds can open round him for one moment and let him see how in the old times, and to-day, there always has been, and still is, through all the wickedness, a compact and steady struggle of goodness in the world. Let him see the church as representing thus the sum of the presence of God in human action, struggling and living always, riding the storms, keeping alive the name of Christ, and the possibility of holiness among men. Let him hear this sainthood of the ages calling to him, "Come, come to us, come with us to God." And is there

not something in him to which that call will appeal to spur him to one more attempt to make his escape, to burst his chains, to be a good man, and be saved. And having once heard that cry, can he go on and sin, without feeling, always, that he is doubly obstinate; that he is setting himself not merely against God, but against his fellows too; that they are looking on with sorrow and with pity, as he goes to his self-chosen ruin? This is no illegitimate appeal. It does not dishonor the influence of God, the heavenly Father, when you plead also with a wicked boy, by all the love and high example of his holy earthly father or mother, to turn to nobler things. All is God's influence, however it is brought to bear. And this you must know, — I tell it to you solemnly, — you cannot sin as if you were the first and only man that God ever made and put into the world. If you will sin, you sin against every high precedent of goodness; you tread on those examples of holiness that have made the world lustrous and sacred; you sweep away the inspiration of sainthood that comes down out of the past, and gathers up around you from the present, like the very breath of heaven; you turn away and go out, obstinately and deliberately, not merely from the kingdom of God, but from the communion of saints. May God help you, and bring you back.

And now my work to-night is done if I can bid any of you away with this great presence of the saints of God surrounding you. Sin is disintegrating. It breaks up and scatters fellowships. It makes souls live and die in solitude. I appeal to you by all the holy society of Christianity. There is holiness all around you to help you and inspire you. You will have to suffer in doing

right. Here are all the martyrs to be your company. You must find Christ and be forgiven by Him. Here is the multitude who have found Him, each with some story of mercy of his own to tell you, till your hopelessness of success shall turn into hope as you listen to them in spite of yourself. You will need patience. Behold all the waiters for God, each at his watching place in all the ages. You have bad habits to conquer. Here is the old battle-field, and the shouts with which other men who have fought down themselves by God's help are hailing their victory in Him, shall be the prophecy of your triumph as you go into the fight. You must not stand alone. All this strength is for you. Come in among these best souls that believe in and are finding God. I lift the words above all low formality that clings to them, and say, Come, join the Church. Not in mere outward act, but in true inward fellowship. Stand boldly with those who are trying to work for God, and willing to suffer for God here; and then in the perfect communion of saints, you shall stand at last among that great multitude which no man can number, who out of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues shall stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clad with white robes, and with palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." May God grant it for us all.

VIII.

THE MAN WITH ONE TALENT.

'Then he which had received the one talent came." — MATT. xxv. 24

WE must all have reproached ourselves sometimes for the difficulty which we found in liking the best people best. We wondered why it was. A man who was estimable in every way, prudent, just, honest, doing all his duties faithfully and well, did not interest us. If he prospered we were not specially glad. If he met with disaster we could not say that we were sorry. While some mere vagabond of fortune, who, doing nothing to deserve prosperity, was always in ill-luck, has drawn out our kindest feeling. I think that there is something of this kind in our feeling about the people in this parable of our Lord's. The man with the five talents and the man with the two talents come up with their orderly reports. They have been faithful and industrious. We know that they have deserved the "well-done" that greets them, and we look on with calm approval as they pass off to enter into the joy of their Lord. And then the poor fellow who had received the one talent comes. He brings his napkin, a poor show of carefulness that covers up his carelessness, and holds it out with his talent in it. We hear his slipshod and cowardly attempt at an excuse. He stands forlorn and helpless as the rebuke falls on him,

and a sort of pity that is close to love springs up in our hearts, and makes us mourn for him as he is dragged off to the outer darkness.

And a large part of what inclines us to like him and such as him is the show of modesty which appears in what they have to say about themselves. We shall see by and by what their modesty is really worth; but their first defence of their inefficiency sounds modest. "I had but one talent," the poor man exclaims, "what could I do? What place for me among the workers and exchangers? How could I dare to front the world and its responsibilities and dangers? I could have done so little even if I had succeeded. What does it matter whether such a little brain and such weak hands as mine worked or were idle, and so I took the safest and the easiest way. Lo, here is thy talent done up in a napkin." How modest, even if weak, it sounds beside the manly confidence which seems touched with pride as it reports: "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold I have gained beside them five talents more."

Let us speak to-day about the one talented men, — the men who are crushed and enfeebled by a sense of their own insignificance. By and by they become cowardly and hide themselves behind their own good-for-nothingness, away from care, away from effort; but at first it is a mere weakening of the joints and stifling of the courage by a feeling of how little there is to them, and so that whether they do ill or well it is not of much consequence; that any attainment really worth attaining is totally out of their reach. What multitudes of such men we see. A young man starts with aspirations after culture. He will make something out of this brain of his. Very soon

he comes in contact with the great, the wise, the witty of his own time and of the past, and then he discovers how little brain he really has to cultivate, and he gives up in despair. Let him be a drudge and make his money, or manage his house, or drive his horses. That is all that he is good for. A young man begins to be a Christian. Great wide visions of free and exalted thought open before him. He will not be a mere traditional believer. He will seek devoutly to understand his faith, and to send his spiritual reason as near as he may to the heart of the great problems of God's providence and man's life. How soon he finds his thought baffled and gives up, and, saying to himself, "Poor fool, what right have such as you to think about the high things of religion?" he subsides into another of the unthinking routine believers who fill our churches. A man is deeply conscious of the misery that is in the world. He tries to help it, but when he sees how little he can do, how big the bulk of wretchedness is against which his poor effort at relief is flung, it seems to him so utterly not worth his while that he lets it all go, and sinks back into the prudent merchant or the self-indulgent philosopher, looking on at woes that he no longer tries to help.

This is the history of so much of the inefficiency of so many of the inefficient men that we see about us. These men have looked at life and given up in despair. Once, long ago, when they were in college, when they first went into business, they took their talent out and gazed at it and wondered how they should invest it; but it looked so little that they lost all heart, and wrapped it in the napkin where it has been ever since, and that is the whole story of their useless lives. And yet one thing seems

clear, that only by the waking up of men like these, only by new courage put into their hopelessness, can the world really make trustworthy growth. It seems very certain that the world is to grow better and richer in the future, however it has been in the past, not by the magnificent achievements of the highly-gifted few, but by the patient faithfulness of the one-talented many. If we could draw back the curtains of the millennium and look in, we should see not a Hercules here and there standing on the world-wasting monsters he had killed; but a world full of men each with an arm of moderate muscle, but each triumphant over his own little piece of the obstinacy of earth or the ferocity of the brutes. It seems as if the heroes had done almost all for the world that they can do, and not much more can come till common men awake and take their common tasks. I do believe the common man's task is the hardest. The hero has the hero's aspiration that lifts him to his labor. All great duties are easier than the little ones, though they cost far more blood and agony. That is a truth we all find out. And this is part of the reason why we make allowance for our poor friend in the parable. But if we look at it in a higher way, surely we may come to feel that the very certainty that the world must be saved by the faithfulness of commonplace people is what is needed to rescue such people from commonplaceness in their own eyes, and clothe their lives with the dignity which they seem so wofully to lack, and which, if any man does not see somewhere shining through the rusty texture of his life, he cannot live it well.

But we may go deeper than this into the causes and the cure of that self-disgust which makes a man think it

not worth while to try to do anything in the world. The real root of it is in the very presence of self-consciousness at all. Any man who is good for anything, if he is always thinking about himself, will come to think himself good for nothing very soon. It is only a fop or a fool who can bear to look at himself all day long, without disgust. And so the first thing for a man to do, who wants to use his best powers at their best, is to get rid of self-consciousness, to stop thinking about himself and how he is working, altogether. Ah, that is so easy to say and so hard to do! Of course it is; but there are two powers which God put into the human breast at the beginning, whose very purpose is to help men do just this. These are the power of loving and working for an absolute duty, and the power of loving and working for our fellow-men. In those two powers lies man's hope to be rescued from self-consciousness, with all its curses. These are the champions that take a man's heavy self off from him when it is getting him down. A man is testing his powers, wondering whether he can do this, wondering whether he can do that, almost despairing when he sees how little he can do. He is lost if he goes on in that way; but then he suddenly discovers that a thing is right and must be done, or the cry of a world, or of a fellow-man, that must have help, rises up and appals him, and the man no longer thinks whether he is strong enough, any more than the mother lion thinks whether it is worth while for her to try, when she springs to help her cub who must be rescued. When a man becomes aware of these great necessities, he is rescued from the consideration of himself altogether. The despotism of such a necessity sets him free, and he just goes and does

what must be done with all his might. This is the history of every brave effective man that ever lived. Moses, Luther, Cromwell, every one of them dallied with the corners of the napkin, and almost folded up the talent; but the call was too strong, and each forgot his weakness and went and worked his fragment of the world's salvation.

I know the answer that suggests itself at once. "These motives are strong enough," you say, "when they are felt. Let them take hold of a man, and they will save him. But the trouble is that they cannot save common men, because common men will not feel them. They are too abstract and too high." And there is truth in that. And to relieve that difficulty something else comes in. These abstract and far-off necessities are taken up and embodied in a new necessity which every man can feel. That new necessity is a personal God. Appealing to the simplest feelings, full of His love, mighty with all the obligation of His fatherhood and mercy, God takes the abstract right and the duties of a half-felt human brotherhood, and blends them both into obedience to Him. The absolute necessity that we should do His will becomes the despot of the life. He may be real to the most feebly perceptive of His children. His is a voice which, stern with majesty, may find its way into the dullest ears. And when He finds a sluggish soul and claims it, He is that soul's rescue from self-consciousness, and self-measurement, and self-disgust. He sets a man free from himself. "I will walk at liberty, for I keep thy commandments." That is at least one meaning of that profound cry of David's. This is the truth of all this parable. "Thou knewest me, thy master, therefore thou shouldst have worked!" How often it has come! How many men have forgotten

themselves when they saw God! Oh, wonderful release! You who are wishing you could do a thing you ought to do, and hiding behind your weakness; you must hear God saying, "Do it!" and feel the necessity of obeying Him, the joy of pleasing Him run through your being like the strong blood of a new life; and then, then only, you are on your feet, and the impossible thing is done. You will not stop then to ask whether you can do it till you feel upon your head the crown of victory. And then you will take that crown off and cast it at His feet, for you will know that really He did it and not you.

Does not this turn the tables entirely? If this sort of inefficiency has its root in self-consciousness, if it can be released only by forgetfulness of self, what has become of the modesty which we thought we saw in the man's face, who came up with his feeble excuse for his unprofitable talent? It is only a thin-veiled pride, not modesty at all. And he who comes with all his faithful work, and offers it to the Lord by whom alone he did it — his is the true humility. I beg you to think of this and feel it. If you are hiding yourself behind your commonness and littleness, come out! That shelter is a citadel of pride. Come out, and take the work that God has given you. Do it for Him and by Him. Cease to parade your feebleness. Work in His light, and so escape the outer darkness.

And now that I have said thus much in general, there is one special application of our subject which interests me very deeply, and I should like to narrow our view to that, and deal with it a little more particularly. Of all the powers of which men easily think that they are wholly or almost destitute, and so from whose exercise

they think themselves excused, the one most commonly alleged, I think, is the religious power, the whole spiritual faculty in general. How familiar it all sounds from constant repetition. A man says, "I know that people are religious. It is no fancy; it is a reality with them. I know their souls do apprehend a supernatural. They live in the presence of spiritual forces which they never see. Eternity is as real to them as time. They love God; they serve Christ; and the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, is with them and in them constantly But for me, simply, all this is impossible. I have no spiritual capacity. It is like asking me to use a sense I have not got; like asking a blind man to see, when you ask me to be religious. I can take only what the senses set before me. I can believe intensely only what I see." And so, not scoffingly, but sadly, he counts himself totally outside the possibility of all the joy and all the culture which he knows comes to his brethren out of the spiritual life, the life of faith.

When I see such a man, all thought of indignation in my mind passes off entirely, and a profound pity, a complete sense of what he might be, and of what he is losing, takes possession of me. It is too serious a matter for mere indignation. I may be angry with a man who might carve statues and paint pictures, if he spent his life in making mock flowers out of wax and paper; but when a man who might have God for company shuts up and disowns those doors of his nature through which God can enter, and lives the emptied life which every man lives who lives without God, his loss is too dreadful to be angry with. You merely mourn for him, and long and try to help him if you can.

And what shall we say of this phenomenon? The first thing that we must say will be this: That religion to that man has, in all probability, been wrongly put. Some temporary, accidental, special form of spiritual life has been set up before him, either by himself or by some one to whom he has listened, as if it were eternal and essential. He has looked at that, and said, truly, that there was nothing in him that could live such a life as that. And so because men said, narrowly, that to be that was to be religious, he has said that there was no possibility of religion for him, while all the time there slept in his nature a rich capacity for some new characteristic type of spiritual force, which, once set free, should flower into luxuriant beauty, and glorify the world. The man has not got hold of the heart of religion at all, only of somebody's special embodiment of it, and sunk back, heartless, because he could not copy that. In the old days, when the accepted type of saintship was found in contemplative mortals who grew haggard on the tops of lofty columns, or starved in the caves of desolate mountains, a brave, full-blooded man, eager for work, and little capable of speculation, might well conclude that he could never be a saint. Two centuries ago a man full of the precious love of Christ, who was told, according to the intense error of the time, that he could not love Christ truly unless he was willing to give up his hope of happiness in Him forever, might well have settled down on the conviction that for him the love of Jesus, whom he longed to love, was impossible. Nowadays, if to worship is made to mean to worship in a certain way, either with an invariable richness, or an invariable simplicity of liturgy, there will always be multitudes who reluctantly

feel that they were not made to worship at all. After all, the fatal fault, the fault that makes one glow most earnestly into hatred of the narrowness of sectarianism, the making that essential which is only accidental, the confining of Christianity to this or that form of Christian life, is that it throws off thousands of earnest men and women who cannot be Christians after that accepted type, and makes them straightway conclude that for them there is no Christianity at all. Worse even than the stifling of the souls within it, by a narrow church, is the starving of the souls without it who have a right to all the richness of religion which religious narrowness involves.

But if he feels this, then the earnest man who believes that all men have in them the capacity for Christianity which many of them are leaving unused because of their incapacity for certain of its special forms, sets himself seriously to asking what is there that is universal and essential, and so really in all men's power. All men will not be Calvinists, or Quakers, or Methodists, or Episcopalians. But underneath and through them all there is something which every man may reach and fasten himself to, and be a Christian under some form or other. What is that something? What will the soul be that finds it? To ask that question is to go back through the dark tortuous ravines of church history, up onto that broad, open table-land of the New Testament, from which all the ravines come down. There it becomes all plain. The man who is a Christian there, with Peter, with John, nay with Jesus, will be a man, spiritual, reverent, and penitent. That is the heart of the matter; he will be conscious of his own soul and its capacities; conscious of God, and full of humble love to Him; con-

scious of his sin and humbly dependent upon Christ for forgiveness and for help. Some things he will know are not universal; he will feel his soul bearing witness of itself on whatever may be its most sensitive and needy side; he will cling to what attribute or attitude of God most nearly and powerfully touches him; he will seem to see this or that method, or sort of efficacy in the work and life of Christ. On all these things he will be himself; none of these things will be the substance of his religion. But the great facts that he was not born to die, that there is a God who loves him and whom he may love, that that God has manifested Himself in the Christ, who will forgive him, and help him, and save him, if he trusts in Him, this is his religion; and when this comes to his soul, and the nature which has been trying to comprehend puzzling doctrines and shape itself into the figure of hard forms, just finds the simplicity of the whole thing, and rests with utter satisfaction on the profoundness of the divine life, and the richness of the divine love; then who shall tell with what surprised delight the impossible opens into the possible, and the spirituality which has been trying to warm itself at the moonlight, and has concluded that it has no capacity for warmth, sees the great sun arise and fills itself with great heartfuls of his heat?

Is this true? Am I right in thinking that the reason why many people are not Christians is that they misrepresent Christianity to themselves, that they have not conceived its simplicity? Am I right when I believe that there is in every man the power to take it in this simplicity and make it his new life? I do believe so fully, and for various reasons. The first reason of all is

one that is no reason except to him who is already a believer, but surely to him it must come very strongly. It does seem to me that no man can really seem to himself to be living a spiritual life, and not hold with all his heart as a possibility, and long to see realized as a fact, the spiritual life in every soul of every son of man. If I truly thought that there was any one man who really was, as so many men have told me that they were, incapable of spirituality, bound down inevitably to carnality and the drudgery of material life, I should lose my whole faith in the capacity of spirituality in any man. The whole would melt and flutter off into a thin dreamy delusion. I think that that same character of God which makes it possible for Him to give the spiritual life to any of His children, makes it necessary that He should give the free opportunity of the same spiritual life to all His children. I am sure that there are men enough in Africa, in Asia, out in the wigwams, nay, right here by my side, to whom many of the statements of truth which are dear to me are and always will be unintelligible; many of the forms of worship which are rich to me are and always will be barren. To know that does not trouble me; but to know that there was anywhere on God's earth a human being who was, and necessarily always must be, incapable of the sense of soul, the love for God, the repentance of sin, the reliance of salvation, I could not know that and yet believe in God.

2. And then another reason why we have a right to believe that there is in every man a capacity for this fundamental and essential Christianity lies in the fact that the activities of such a Christianity really demand only those powers which in ordinary human life we all hold

to be absolutely universal. In higher degrees, straining them to loftier reaches, refining them, exalting them unspeakably, yet still keeping their essence unimpaired, religion takes the powers that belong to all men, and makes them the instruments of her sublimest tasks. When we shall find a man who is entirely incapable of realizing what he has never seen, entirely unable to answer love with a responsive gratitude, entirely unsensitive to the sorrowfulness of doing wrong; a man, I say, not who has not all these powers at their best, but a man who has no spark of them to fan to life, no seed of them to foster and to ripen; then we have found a man of whom it will be as impossible to make a Christian as it would be to make a Christian of a mountain or a tree. But these simple first powers are just what in their universality characterize our humanity. It is largely by their possession that we know a man from a piece of wood or stone carved in the human likeness. These powers are in all humanity, and according to the richness with which they inhabit and inspire it, humanity becomes more truly human. These are the powers that play through life and make its poetry, that breathe through history and make the music to which the centuries move and by which they know each other's deeper life. They are the soul of human character, the bond of human brotherhood. They make the beauty of the family, the majesty of the state. They culminate in Christianity and make it seem to be indeed the great faith of humanity, — the land of spiritual truth in which each man by his pure humanity has a true place.

3. If thus the spiritual life is something not strange in its essence, but familiar; if its working force consists of the simplest and most fundamental of the powers of

humanity brought into contact with and filled full of a divine influence, then another thing which we see continually is not strange. And this other thing constitutes another reason for believing that in every man the capacity of the spiritual life abides, hidden if it is not seen, sleeping if it is not awake. There are certain experiences in every life which have their power just in this, that they break through the elaborate surface, and get down to the simplest thoughts and emotions of the human heart. Great sickness, sudden bereavement, great joy, intense love or enthusiasm, fatherhood, the near sight of death, — all of these supreme experiences of life are characterized by the breadth, the largeness of the simple thoughts and feelings they awaken. In them you have the crust broken to fragments, and the great heart of the life laid open. And if that heart, laid open, is inevitably, universally spiritual; if, as we always see in these supreme moments of the life, a soul most vividly asserts itself, and the man insists upon another world and on a God, and takes the story of the Christhood into his heart with hungry eagerness, what does it prove but this, that when the simplest base of any man's life is reached, when the ground above it is torn off by an earthquake, or melted bare by the sunshine of happiness, there is the capacity for spirituality, the soil in which the spiritual seed must grow. When I see what we see so often, the man in great trouble or great joy grown suddenly religious, the glad "Thank God!" or the agonized "God help me!" bursting out of unaccustomed lips, I think it does not mean desperation, and it does not mean hypocrisy It means that for once in that man's life the true soil of his nature has been laid bare, and it has claimed the di-

vine relations for which it was made; just as you strip the layer of rock off from a bed of earth that lay below it, and in a day the newly exposed earth is sprouting all over with grass that you never planted. It has caught the grass seeds out of the air. The wandering birds have brought them to it. It has found them treasured in itself. It puts forth upon them its own simple nature, and grows green from side to side. The man's hard surface may close over when the great agony or the great joy is past, and all may seem just as before, but he who once has known the movements of this new capacity never can think of himself as he was used to think. He must remember. He may go on living a most earthly life, but he knows forever that there is a spiritual heaven and a spiritual hell. He never can say of himself again, "I have no spiritual capacity." He has discovered what he often has denied. New regions of joy and sorrow, both infinite, have opened to his sight around, beyond the poor vexations and amazements of his daily life. He has looked upon God, and his soul never can forget how it answered when it met the gaze of the love and power which made it, and for which it was made.

4. But all these indications of the universal spiritual capacity in man seem to me, after all, only to be leading up to one consummate exhibition. I wish that I could set that consummate exhibition worthily before you. To the believer in the New Testament the Incarnation of Christ must stand as the supreme event of history. Whatever it meant must be the deepest truth that man can know. And, amid all the various speculations and opinions about Christ's person, all believers in Him agree in this: that He most perfectly represented the type of human life

not a humanity exceptional in its qualities, but the true human, drawn in lines of exceptional light and fire, but recognizable still by every man who deeply studied his own nature. Here is the first unshaken power of that wonderful life. The Jew and the Saxon have found the man of Nazareth their brother. The man of the first century and the man of the nineteenth have found in Him the interpretation of themselves. The hero on the battle-field, the martyr at the stake, the school-boy at his desk, the mother in her anxieties, all pour out to Him their fears, and draw out from Him their courage. What is most wonderful, even in a struggle with sin, the sinless man does not fail his human brethren ; and the paths up the mountain of the temptation, and into the garden of Gethsemane, are worn with the feet of men and women going to gather from His struggles the power of victory over the terrors and weaknesses that are besetting them. And now it must be forever a fact of unspeakable importance that when the typal man appeared, he was not only one who hungered and who thirsted, who loved and hated, who dreaded and hoped, who suffered and enjoyed, but he was one whose nature leaped beyond the mere material and grasped the spiritual. He was one who loved God. He was one who felt sin and shuddered at its touch. If in the Incarnation I behold the elevation of the lowest faculties of man, I cannot help seeing, too, the naturalization, the familiarizing of the highest. Just suppose that we stood back before the birth of Christ. We knew that He was coming. We knew that one was to be born who, while He should represent our humanity at its best, would yet represent our humanity perfectly. How we should have watched for Him. When He comes we shall know

what this strange puzzle of humanity means. When He comes we shall know what man is, and so what men shall be. At last He comes! Here is the unmistakable humanity. Here is the baby's weakness, the boy's growth. Here are the appetites, the passions, that we know so well. But here, clear from the earliest consciousness and growing with His growth, there is the consuming appetite of spirituality. This representative man is a man who sees all material things only as the means of spiritual culture, to whom immortality is a first fact of human existence, to whom God is more real than his brethren, to whom sin is the one evil of all the groaning and complaining world. And when, staggered by such a prevalence and strength of what is rare and feeble in the humanity we know, our faith in His representativeness is shaken, and we begin to say, "He cannot represent us now. These must be qualities in Him that we can have no share in. He cannot expect us, certainly not all of us, to be like Him here." He answers, "No! I will not be cut off from you, my brethren." He cries to all men, "Follow me! Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. So only can you find rest unto your souls. I go to my Father and to your Father! Yours as well as mine." By every type and symbol, by every degradation of the outward life down to the level of His lowest children, by the eager avoidance of everything which might seem to associate Him in limited sympathy with any part or portion of mankind, He was forever claiming the whole humanity for His great purposes and standards. He was forever crying, as He cried there in the temple, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

That was the Incarnation. That was the Christ who

came! To believe in the Incarnation, really to understand that Christ, and yet to think that we or any other men in all the world are essentially incapable of spiritual living, is an impossibility. It is through Him that millions of men have come, as He said that they should come, to the Father. See what that means. Millions of men have seen in Him first what they were meant for, have believed in their own spiritual capacity by the conviction of His life, and then, believing that they could, they have lived the life that He lived; not stopped the storms or raised the dead; those were but external forms of operation; but entered into the joy of the Lord, the reliance upon spiritual truth, the certainty of spiritual privilege, which was His life.

In face of all that I behold in man, in face especially of all that I behold in this man who shows humanity to itself, I do not know how to believe that there is any man living who is incapable of spiritual life; any man who may not know and value his own soul; know and love God; know and dread and repent of sin. I may understand that this or that expression of spirituality in dogma, this or that incorporation of spirituality in formal ceremonies, is unintelligible, unattainable by you; but that does not justify you in giving up the thought of spirituality altogether and living a carnal life. Somewhere, for your soul, there is an entrance into that love of God for which all our souls were made, and for which the Son of God claimed them all. It may be, nay, in the deepest sense, it must be that your way is new, — a different spiritual career leading into a different spiritual attainment from any that any man ever followed or attained before. Do not stunt your own growth, do not hamper the free grace

of God by making up your mind beforehand what kind of a Christian you must be. There is a faith which, out of all the world, and, above all, out of Christ, gathers a perfect conviction that the soul is divine, and can come to its God; then faithfully takes the next step towards Him by the faithful doing of the next known duty, the faithful acceptance of the next opened truth; and so choosing no way for itself, but only sure that it is God's, and that God is leading it, ever advances in His growing light and comes at last to Him. Such faith may Christ increase in us.

Let us do what we ought and what we can for our own souls at once. For the judgment is coming not only at the last day, but all the time. Every day the power that we will not use is failing from us. Every day the God whose voice speaks through all the inevitable necessities of our moral life is saying of the men who keep their talents wrapped in napkins, "Take the talent from him;" and since he will not enter into the perfect light he must be "cast into the outer darkness."

IX.

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE FAITH.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

"When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" — LUKE xviii. 8.

I WELCOME you, this morning, to the time-honored observance of Thanksgiving Day. Generation after generation has taken up the pious institution of our fathers, and found in it the fit expression of their own experiences and desires. And the first conviction with which we certainly must greet each new Thanksgiving Day must be that it belongs to us, and that if we are to be really thankful, it must be for mercies which we ourselves are receiving, and with reference to the circumstances under which we live. No day in all the year so demands to be surrounded with its own local scenery. No service so requires to be timely. And therefore one is always led, in thinking what he shall say to the people on Thanksgiving Day, to desire to speak peculiarly of the time in which he and the people are living, and to point out the causes of thankfulness, the thoughts, the lessons, and the warnings which are involved in the social, the political, or the religious conditions which are right around us.

With this feeling, I should like to say a few words this morning upon the religious conditions with which we are

all more or less familiar. I am led to think and speak of the disturbed condition of faith in our time. No subject is more pressing. Even the most careless man's thoughts rest very much upon it. It is discussed and talked of everywhere. And it is most important. One may very clearly say, that if there is no cause for gratitude and hope in the state of religious life, then, whatever other blessings may be showered out around us, to the deepest sense, and to the most serious men, a Thanksgiving Day becomes a mockery. Let us see then what there is that we can understand about the disturbed and tumultuous faith of our strange times.

"When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" was Jesus's question. There have always been two different opinions among people who looked for a final perfection of all things under the Christian faith. One class of men has held that the perfecting state of things was already begun, and that everything would go on developing and improving till the glorious consummation should be reached. The other class has always held that matters were continually getting worse and worse, and must go on decaying and degenerating until they touched the bottom of corruption, and then by some law of reaction and replacement an upward movement must begin, and perfection speedily arrive. It is one of the strangest things, I think, about the world and its history, that the advocates of each of these opinions have alike been able to find corroboration of what they believed in the things about them. One man has waved his hand enthusiastically over human history, and said, "See how everything is improving. It will be perfect before long. It has only to keep on." Another man standing right

by his side, pointing to the same history, says, "You see that everything is getting worse and worse. The only hope is that it will get as bad as possible, and be destroyed, and then something better can come in." And the strange thing is that both of them find in the self-same world abundant confirmations of their theories. The facts must be very remarkably involved and mixed out of which two such different inferences can be drawn, on which two such different anticipations can be built.

And this double interpretation of human history does not come merely from the different characters of different ages. Both theories find confirmation in every age. Both are confirmed by some things that men see in this age of ours. While we speak of the darker symptoms, the signs of decaying faith in our own time, we must not forget that there are other symptoms of a brighter sort which make men hopeful of the future of their race, — more hopeful, probably, in these anxious days than men have ever been before. Let us bear this in mind.

The lack of faith, or the disturbance of faith, which is such a serious feature of our times, is very manifold and puzzling in its influences, but is very simple in its nature and causes. It is traceable, almost everywhere, to the wonderful increase of men's knowledge of second causes, interfering with, or overclouding their belief in first causes, in principles, in providences, in a personal and loving care back of everything. It comes to many things, but this is where it all comes from. This is where lies the certain amount of truth which is in the statement that times of ignorance are times of faith. No doubt it is easier for men who have learned nothing of the marvellous way in which every object in nature is made a

reservoir and a distributer of force, to look back straight into the face of the Sovereign Will out of which all force originally proceeds. It is easier for the savage, with his chief standing over him, ready to strike him down with his club if he disobeys, to realize and believe in government, than it is for the citizen of a highly organized state who is reached by the authority which is at the head of all only through many subordinate agencies and by nicely adjusted relationships. So that there is some truth in the statement that much knowledge and elaborate life are dangerous to faith in final principles and forces. The more our mind is fastened upon second causes, the more danger there is that it will fail to reach the great first cause. It is a danger to be met, not one to be avoided; but it is one, in the first place, to be recognized very clearly. I need not try to tell the magnificent story of how natural science has brought out the starry host of second causes from their obscurity, and shown how He who works everything, works by everything in all the world. We all know something of it; and we know, too, how the profuse discovery of means has in our times clouded the thought of the maker in many minds. We know this, and I need not dwell on it. But I am anxious to point out that there are other skepticisms, other derangements of faith besides those which belong to the region of natural science, which yet have essentially the same character and origin. It may sound strange and fanciful to say that those two evils of which we hear so much, corruption in political life and formalism in church life, are really one, at bottom, with the scientific skepticism of our time; but if one looks at them philosophically he must see that it is truly so. Corrup-

tion in political life is really skepticism. It is a distrust, a disuse which has lasted so long that it has grown into disbelief of political principles, of the first fundamental truths of the sacredness of government and the necessity of righteousness. And where has such a disbelief come from? We all know well enough. It is from the narrow view which has looked at machineries, and magnified them till they have hid from view the great purposes for which all machineries exist. If a man tells me that it is absolutely necessary that such or such a political party should be maintained whether its acts and its men are righteous or unrighteous, or else the government will fall, that man is an unbeliever. He has lost his faith in the first principles of government, and he has lost it by persistently tying down his study and his soul to second causes, to the mere machinery of party. And so in church and religious matters, when they are invaded by formalism. When a man tells me that religion cannot stand unless the church be just so organized, or that God will be lost out of men's thoughts unless you teach certain traditional things about Him, and worship Him with a certain ritual, that man seems to me to be an unbeliever of the most dangerous kind. He has lost his real faith in God and Christianity and the church by his very devotion to the means, or second causes, through which they work. When I heard an English bishop preach, this summer, that it was necessary to maintain a particular mode of burying the dead, for fear of disturbing men's belief in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that preaching seemed to me to indicate a lack of faith in the real essential truth and power of the doctrine, which could not be surpassed by

any skeptic. And so it is always. Our jealousy for certain forms, our magnifying their importance, our fear that Christianity will not stand if we do not state and utter it just so, — what is it all at the bottom but a lack of faith in Christianity itself, in its vital power and its original truth? Dogmatism and ritualism are all wrong when they think themselves supremely believing. Both are really symptomatic forms of unbelief. Whenever a man believes that only his machinery can save the nation or the church, he is a disbeliever in the vital force by which the nation or the church lives.

Have we not here, then, the general character of the unbelief or feeble faith of this strange century in which we live? It is that which naturally belongs to a much discovering, much questioning, much reading age, an age critical and inquisitive. It comes from such a multiplication of details and methods as hides principles and purposes out of sight. The naturalist is so busy with the system of nature that he rests there, and loses God. The politician is so busy with the machinery of party that he stops there, and loses patriotism and justice. The worshipper is so busy with the details of worship that he lives in them, and loses Christ. In all you see it is essentially the same, — the disbelief of a critical and cultured time. That it is different from the disbelief of other times there can be no doubt. It is more subtle, more serious, and so perhaps more persistent and dangerous. When we say that it is more widespread we are very apt to be deceived. We are apt to think that our time has less faith than the ages that have gone before, but such an opinion very commonly comes from some idealizing of the past. The world is like a growing man in many ways. It looks back to

its childhood, and sees that childhood flooded with a glory which it did not have when it was present. As it seems to every man as if his boyhood were more religious than his manhood has become, so it seems to the world always as if there were some past age, some blessed time, primitive or mediæval, when faith was universal, calm, and absolute. Both are mere dreams. You cannot find the ages of faith if you look carefully back through history. The disturbances of faith in other times have been different from ours, but there have always been disturbances, and whether they have been greater or less than ours no man can say ; for who can really know the mental troubles of any other time except his own ?

I am inclined to think that such a statement of the character of our time and of the nature of its skepticism will not satisfy many people. I think that many people are under the impression, not merely that certain causes have turned aside the power of implicit faith from its true objects, but that the whole power of enthusiastic faith is sick, if indeed it be not dead. They point us to the prosaicalness of everything. They complain that there is nothing noble. They would depict their century as if it were given up entirely to low economies, merely prudent, safe, scheming, well-to-do, with nothing of the romantic generosity and enterprise of other days. "That is what is really at the bottom of the decay of religious and political faith," they say. So I suppose every age has looked to the men who lived in it. But when we ask whether such a charge is really true about the age we live in, I think we are surprised to find how astonishingly untrue it is. It seems as if there had hardly ever been any century which would send down into history

more romantic passages, more heroic and poetic deeds, than just this prosaic nineteenth century in which we live. We are astonished when we count them over. When we think of the adventure of our time; when we recall the great Arctic explorations that have called forth an endurance and daring which have been unsurpassed in other days; when we remember the picturesque meetings of strange peoples, which the advance of civilization has brought about, — the meeting of England and Russia face to face in Central Asia, the meeting of Anglo-Saxon and Chinaman on the Pacific shore, the meeting of New Englander and Indian upon the prairies; when we consider the history of slavery in this country with all the passionate experience that it created, the tragedies of private life, the miracles of self-devotion, and the convulsive revolution with which it shook the land; when we consider these things and a thousand others, what is there that is more romantic than they are in any history of any age? What is there anywhere more poetic, anything that more appeals to the imagination than the brilliant advance of natural science? What is there in chivalry more exalted and thrilling than the lives of men who have lived and died in privation and delight for science and its progress? When have men ever proved themselves more capable of lofty and large ideas than in these days, when they are dreaming of a "federation of mankind," war replaced by peaceful arbitration, and criminals reformed by industry and kindness, and poverty obliterated by universal organized charity? No crusade of the middle ages has anything like the real romantic inspiration that belongs to the modern crusade against ignorance, — the dream of universal education. No old vision of a splendid feudalism

so taxed and exalted the imagination as the modern picture of self-government. No! It is not that our age is sordid. It is not that it has proved itself incapable of large ideas and glowing visions. It has a romance brighter than any other age ever possessed. And so long as it has that, it has not lost the capacity of faith, — the appetite and love for the unseen and transcendental.

Let us sum up, then, some of the characteristics of our confused time. It is certainly one of the most interesting times in which a man could have been sent into the world to live. It is full of contradictions. On the one hand, it has accumulated an immense knowledge of details and second causes which have made it hard to look beyond to principles and the first origin of things. On the other hand, it has struggled with the principles of life with most ambitious curiosity. It combines immense material development with great susceptibility to spiritual influences. It has disowned the older forms of authority, so that the thunders of a Roman anathema peal harmlessly through its clear atmosphere, and at the same time it has become so conscious of the largeness of truth that it is willing to listen to almost any confident charlatan who claims to be its teacher, — the most practical and the most visionary, the most hard-headed and the most soft-hearted, the most positive and the most perplexed, the most desponding and the most eager, the most independent and the most credulous of all the ages that the world has seen.

We are in the habit of hearing all this character of our age summed up in the statement that it is a "transition time." It rather gets its character from its relation to what has gone before it, and what is to come after it, than from what it contains within itself. This is what

gives it so much of an aspect of restlessness and unquiet. It is full of the sense of having in many ways broken with the past, and of having not yet thoroughly apprehended the future that is to come. It is not the happiest frame of life. The description that one of its thinkers, the subtlest and most characteristic perhaps of all of them, has given of himself tells well enough the story of the age, —

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead
> The other powerless to be born,
> With nowhere yet to rest my head
> Like these on earth I wait forlorn."

And yet the forlornness of such a mood is always brightened by the persistent conviction that there is a future, and that what there is to come, hard as it is to apprehend, will certainly be apprehended some day. If we described the whole life of the world, as has often been done, as if it were the continuous life of one growing man, this age of ours must correspond, we think, just to the point where youth is passing into manhood. Our world now seems to me to be wonderfully like a high-spirited young man of twenty-one years old. It is just coming of age. It has all the characters and moods that belong to that most interesting and perplexing creature. It has all his remonstrance against the tyranny of the past; all his self-confidence, and at the same time all his self-disgusts; all his self-reliance, with yet all his feebleness; his hope, his petulance, his self-indulgence; his craving for the definite, and his delight in what is vague; his passion for the real and the ideal together; his satisfaction in the present, and at the same time his eager and impatient expectation of what is to come; full of silent moods

and yet full of exuberant spirits; reckless and defiant, yet wonderfully capable of tenderness. Altogether the same unsatisfied, unsatisfactory, and interesting creature.

And now of your young man of twenty-one what do you expect? Interesting as he is, he cannot stay what he is; and certainly he cannot go back into any of the lost conditions of his boyhood and his babyhood again. He must go forward; all these new thoughts and passions which have come into him since he was fifteen, and which now are seething in confusion, must find their places and proportions to one another, and a new peace of higher adjustments must come, — the peace of harmonized and well balanced manhood. And just exactly so it must be with our twenty-one years' old world. An age of transition of course is temporary. It cannot stay just what it is. An everlasting nineteenth century would be intolerable. But on the other hand it cannot go back into boyhood or babyhood again. The man who, tired of the freedom of individual thought, wants to push the church back into the peace of mere authoritative and traditional religion, and the man who, tired of the noise and confusion of popular government, wishes to push man back into feudalism, both are mistaken and neither will succeed. Confusion is to be escaped not by being repressed into stagnation but by being developed into peace. Surely it is no weak optimism to believe that such a development must come — an age critical but not irreverent, and reverent without superstition, full of positive belief and of tolerant charity, in which yet neither interferes with nor deadens the other.

> "There may perhaps yet dawn an age
> More fortunate, alas! than we,

Which without hardness may be sage,
And gay without frivolity."

No elements which you propose to mix combine perfectly at once. You drop your salt into water and it lies crude and undissolved at first; by and by the water takes it in and the two are one. Into a world which has been governed by authority you throw strong notions of liberty and personal independence. They lie crudely together at first, as they are lying now; but they must ultimately be assimilated, and a freer judgment as to what authority it is right to obey must be united with a more loyal obedience to the authority that has been willingly acknowledged. That is the future for which we have a right to hope.

The most pathetic sign of such a transition time is in the position in which it places the best individuals who live in it. The best men in the more fixed and stationary ages speak out the loudest. They stand on certainties, and speak with clear and confident tones. The most noticeable and touching thing about such times as ours is the way in which so many of the best men are silent and will not speak. It is so both in politics and in religion. The most thoughtful men are always tending to withdraw from a political confusion which they cannot understand, and make themselves mere spectators. And how many of the purest and devoutest people whom we know refuse to speak a word in all the tumult of religious and ecclesiastical debate, that always is so loud around us. To take again the words of a very remarkable poem of that most representative poet of our time, whom I have twice quoted already: —

"Achilles ponders in his tent,
The kings of modern thought are dumb,
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come.
Silent, while years engrave the brow,
Silent, the best are silent now."

We all feel certainly a disposition of the best and deepest part of us to share this silence, to be still and wait. And when the most representative men, the men most in the spirit of our time do speak, it is not strange that they should be confused and often self-contradictory. It is not strange, it is most suggestive and instructive, that hardly any thinker should be wholly self-consistent; that the most thoughtful men should say things and then take them back, or explain them away; should lay themselves open to charges, and then deny that they deserve them, and so puzzle both their friends and enemies. It is the natural symptom of a time that is not sure how much of the past is good, and not sure what there is waiting in the future; a time and men "wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born."

I do not certainly say that such a time is best, though really in my heart I do not think the world has ever seen a better. There must be better ones to come. The story of the world is not told yet. "We are ancients of the earth and in the morning of the times." But I have only tried to see as clearly as I could what all these symptoms, of which our most serious books and our morning newspapers alike are full, really mean, and what place this bewildering age of ours does probably hold in the long series of the ages. The character that I have drawn of it in these mere fragmentary suggestions is not the mere picture of a theory. It is a character which breaks out

everywhere. I see it in every book I read, in the action of every public man I watch. I hear it in every discussion of any serious question, and in the lightest talk I hold with any of you at your own firesides. It is not that my account of it is not true, but only that I have failed to state it as I see it, if you have not recognized the picture.

And now the question comes which is most personally pressing. How in a time like this can a man live and get the best out of it, and at the same time shun its worst? Here in this time of uncertainties, here in this wandering transition age, we are to live, whether we will or no. We did not choose our time. We may wish and wish in vain that we had been born centuries ago when, as we vainly think, no man doubted, and all men were satisfied. But here we are, not there. And what can one do with his own personal life to keep it from complete confusion, and if it be possible to make it grow strong and rich and true, out of these very circumstances which, perhaps, we hopelessly deplore?

One answer only I can give, and that is very simple. In all the uncertainty and change it is the true man's place to find what there is that is permanent and certain, and to cling to that. In other sorts of times men do not distinguish between what is lasting and what is transitory. All seems fixed together. Ice and rock alike are solid. In times like these, when the ice breaks up, the rocks stand out solid and strong among the loosened waves. It is a time to find out what is sure and certain and eternal.

Let me try to tell you in a few words what it seems to me are the solid things to which a man may cling. First and most prominent, because most superficial, is the solid-

ity and persistency of nature, the calmness and oldness and orderliness of this world of growth and matter. It means something that, in the disorder of thought and feeling, so many men are fleeing to the study of orderly nature. And it is rest and comfort. Whatever men are feeling, the seasons come and go. Whatever men are doubting, the rock is firm under their feet, and the steadfast stars pass in their certain courses overhead. Men who dare count on nothing else may still count on the tree's blossoming and the grape coloring. It is good for a man perplexed and lost among many thoughts to come into closer intercourse with Nature, and to learn her ways and to catch her spirit. It is no fancy to believe that if the children of this generation are taught a great deal more than we used to be taught of nature, and the ways of God in nature, they will be provided with the material for far healthier, happier, and less perplexed and anxious lives than most of us are living.

And secondly, it surely is a time when one ought to make much of the experiences of life which are perpetual, and so which always bring us back to something solid. Joy, sorrow, friendship, work, charity, these are eternal. They do not change with changing times; and if a man throws himself heartily into the life of his fellow-men and takes the pleasures and the pains that come out of the touchings of his life with theirs, he is brought into association with these unchanging verities, and his own life becomes less oppressively unruly. Have you never known something of this? Have you not sometimes, when most perplexed and bewildered with many thoughts, found refuge, strength, health, and peace in mere return from solitude to those relations with your brethren for which

man was made? A joy that comes by human company, even a sorrow which has its root in a true human love, brings a man back from the solitude which is not good for him, and which is haunted with perplexity. It puts him again into company with the humanity which has known joy and sorrow all through its changing life. Never was there a time when a man more needed the help and strength of simple, kindly, familiar life among his fellow-men.

And the next thing which is permanent, and which a man ought to cling to with special closeness now, is duty. How old it is, how strong and sure! How strong it makes us when we think that this same simple, single instinct of right and wrong, which makes us do our act to-day, is precisely the same instinct that made men honest and kept them pure before the Flood. So many of the perplexities of our time are on the surface. They do not reach down to where the conscience lies calm and serene below. And when "this unchartered freedom tires," when we "feel the weight of chance desires," it is good to supplicate for the control of duty, and find a "repose that ever is the same." When a man, lost and confused, comes to you saying, "How can one live in such a time as this? What shall I do?" Answer him first of all simply and strongly, "Do right! Do your duty!" and you have given him at least one sure thing among all that is unsure.

But then, above all things, there is the strength and permanence of religion. Never was there such a time for a man to cling to that. "Ah, but," you say, "that is the most uncertain of all things! What is more unsettled than religion?" But no, my friends. There may

be many thoughts about religion that are not clear, but religion itself, nay, Christianity itself, is sure, and now is just the time for souls to come to a more certain hold upon, as they come to a simpler conception of its truth. The knowledge that love is at the root of everything the answer of the human soul to the appealing nature and life of Jesus Christ; the value of the soul above the body, of the character above the circumstances; and the eternal life, these are what men may cling to. If any man does cling to these, he is really upon a rock, and whatever else which he thought was rock may prove to be ice and melt away, here he is safe. Here is the great, last certainty. Be sure of God. With simple, loving worship, by continual obedience, by purifying yourself even as He is pure, creep close, keep close to Him. Be sure of God and nothing can overthrow or drown you.

And so let us give thanks to God upon Thanksgiving Day. Nature is beautiful, and fellow-men are dear, and duty is close beside us, and He is over us and in us. What more do we want, except to be more thankful and more faithful, less complaining of our trials and our time, and more worthy of the tasks and privileges He has given us. We want to trust Him with a fuller trust, and so at last to come to that high life where we shall "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our request be made known unto God," for that and that alone is peace.

X.

UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

"And to keep himself unspotted from the world." — JAMES i. 27

MEN and women grow older in this world of ours, and as the years advance they change. Of all the changes that they undergo those of their moral natures are the most painful to watch. The boy changes into the man, and there is something lost which never seems to come back again. It is like the first glow of the morning that passes away — like the bloom on the blossom that never is restored. Your grown up boy is wise in bad things which he used to know nothing about. He has a hard conscience now, instead of the soft and tender one he used to carry. He is scornful about sacred things, instead of devout as he was once. He is no longer gentle, but cruel; no longer earnest, but flippant; no longer enthusiastic, but cynical. He tolerates evils that he used to hate. He makes excuses for passions that he once thought were horrible. He qualifies and limits the absolute standards of truthfulness and purity. He has changed. His life no longer sounds with a perfectly clear ring, or shines with a perfectly white lustre. He is no longer unspotted.

And then when a grown man sees and knows all this either in himself or in another, he is sure also that the change has come somehow from this boy having grown up to manhood in the midst of his fellow-men. We all

have a dim kind of belief that if we could have taken that life and isolated it, it would not have grown so bad. We could have kept its freshness and its purity in it if we could have kept it to itself. We grant that there is evil in the heart, but we do not believe that the mere fermentation of that evil in itself could have come to all this. The manhood has had to grow here in this great universal mass of things, this total of many various influences which we call "the world." Home, school, business, society, politics, human life in general in all its various activities, — out of this have come the evil forces that have changed and soiled this life. It has not been himself. He has walked through mire, and the filth has gathered on his skirts. He has walked through pestilence, and the poison has crept into his blood. We all think of ourselves, and in our kinder moments think of our brethren, as victims. We have not cast away the jewel, but we have fallen among thieves, and it has been taken from us. Not merely the evil heart within us has shown its wickedness, but the evil that is around us has fastened to us. We have not merely been spotted, but "spotted by the world."

There is something very sublime, I think, in the Bible conception of "The World" which we are always meeting. It seems to bear witness to the Bible's truth when we are able to gather from it such a complete conception of this mass of things which we know in fragments, and of whose unity we are forever catching half-glimpses. The Bible touches us because it seems to know all about this "World," — this total of created things, this cosmos, this aggregate of disorder with purposes of order manifest all through it, this sea of tempest with its tides of

law, this mixture of insignificant trifles with the most appalling solemnities, this storehouse of life and activity and influence which we are crowding on and crowded by every day, out of which come the shaping forces of our life, which we call the world. The Bible knows all about it, and so we listen when the Bible speaks.

Here then we have our fact. Our own experience discovers it. The Bible steps in and describes it. "Lives spotted by the world." The stained lives. Where is the man or woman who does not know what it means? There is the most outward sort of stain — the stain upon the reputation. It is what men see as they pass us, and know us by it for one who has struggled and been worsted. What man has come to middle life, and kept so pure a name that men look at it for refreshment and courage as they pass? When we remember what a source of strength the purest reputations in the world have always been, what a stimulus and help, then we get some idea of what the world loses in the fact that almost every reputation becomes so blurred and spotted that it is wholly unfit to be used as a light or a pattern before the man is old enough to give it any positive character or force. Then there are the stains upon our conduct, the impure and untrue acts which cross and cloud the fair surface of all our best activity. And then, far worst of all, there is the stain upon the heart, of which nobody but the man himself knows anything, but which to him gives all their unhappiness to the other stains, the debased motives, the low desires, the wicked passions of the inner life. These are the stains which we accumulate. We set out for the battle in the morning strong and clean. By and by we catch a moment in the lull of the struggle to look down

upon ourselves, and how tired and how covered with dust and blood we are. How long back our first purity seems — how long the day seems sometimes — how long since we began to live. You know what stains are on your lives. Each of us knows, every man and woman, as we are here this morning. They burn to our eyes even if no neighbor sees them. They burn in the still air of the Sabbath even if we do not see them in the week. You would not think for the world that your children should grow up to the same stains that have fastened upon you. You dream for them of a "life unspotted from the world," and the very anxiety of that dream proves how you know that your own life is spotted and stained.

And that dream for the children is almost hopeless. At any rate the danger is that you will give it up by and by, and get to expecting and excusing the stains that will come upon them as they grow older. The worst thing about all this staining power of the world is the way in which we come to think of it as inevitable. We practically believe that no man can keep himself unspotted. He must accumulate his stains. Hear how much there is of this low, despairing tone on every side of us. You talk about the corruption of political life that seems to have infected the safest characters, and the answer is, "Oh, there is nothing strange about it. No man can go through that trial and not fall. No man can live years in Washington, and be wholly pure." You talk with a great many business men about some point of doubtful conventional morality, and they look at you in your professional seclusion, with something that is more than half pity. "That is all very well for you," they say, "but

that will not do upon the street. I should like to see you try to apply that standard to the work I have to do to make my bread." And just so when you talk about earnestness to the mere creature of society. "It is a mere dream," the answer is, "to think that social life can be elevated and made noble. Whoever goes there must expect the spots upon the robe; and so, if he is wise, will go with robes that will show spots as little as possible, — robes as near the world's color as he is able to procure." It is not true. Men do go through political life as pure and poor as any most retired mechanic lives and works at his bench. And there are merchants who do carry, through all the temptations of business life, the same high standards, — hands just as clean, and hearts just as tender, as they have when they pray to God or teach their little children. And social life is lighted up with the lustre of the white, unstained robes of many a pure man or woman who walks through its very midst. But the spots fall so thick that it is easy for men to say, "No one can go there and escape them. It is hopeless to try to keep yourself unspotted from the world;" and then (for that comes instantly), "We are not to blame for the world's spots upon us."

I said this was the worst, but there is one worse thing still. When a man comes not merely to tolerate, but to boast of the stains that the world has flung upon him; when he wears his spots as if they were jewels; when he flaunts his unscrupulousness and his cynicism and his disbelief and his hard-heartedness in your face as the signs and badges of his superiority; when to be innocent and unsuspicious and sensitive seems to be ridiculous and weak; when it is reputable to show that we are men of

the world by exhibiting the stains that the world has left upon our reputation, our conduct, and our heart, then we understand how flagrant is the danger; then we see how hard it must be to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. The world's stains do become matters of pride and choice. We compare ourselves with one another. We decide what stains shall be most honorable. We give conventional ranks and values to the signs of our own disgrace. It is more respectable to have learnt heartlessness from the world than to have learnt dishonesty; more honorable to have become miserly than to have become licentious. As the Jews used to establish a rank and precedence between the commandments which God had given them, so we decide which of the laws of the world, our master, it is good to keep, and which others it is good to break.

And now, in view of all this, we come to our religion. We hear St. James, as true to-day as when he wrote to those first Christians. In his unsparing words he tells us what Christianity has to say to all this state of things. "Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." See how intolerant Religion is. She starts with what men have declared to be impossible. She refuses to bring down her standards. She insists that men must come up to her. No man is thoroughly religious, she declares, unless he does this, which it seems so hard to do, unless he goes through this world untainted, as the sunbeam goes through the mist. Religion refuses to be degraded into a mere means for fulfilling the purposes of man's selfishness. She proclaims absolute standards, and will not lower

them. She will not say to any man, weak and compromising with the world, "Well, your case is a hard one, and for you I waive a part of my demands. For you religion shall mean not to do this sin or that sin. These other sins, in consideration of your feebleness and temptations, I give you leave to do." Before every man, in the very thickest of the world's contagions, she stands and says with her unwavering voice, "Come out. Be separate. Keep yourself unspotted from the world."

There is something sublime in this unsparingness. It almost proves that our religion is divine, when it undertakes for man so divine a task. It could not sustain itself in its great claim to be from God unless it took this high and godlike ground, that whoever named the name of Christ must depart from all iniquity. My dear friends, our religion is not true unless it have this power in it. Unless the statesman taking it to Congress, the merchant taking it into business, the man or woman carrying it with them where they go in all their ordinary occupations and amusements, do indeed find it the power of purity and strength. We must bring our faith to this test. Unless our Christianity does this for us, it is not the true religion that St. James talked of, and that the Lord Jesus came to reveal and to bestow.

Let us be sure of this. We go for our assurance to the first assertion of the real character of Christianity in the life of Jesus. It is terrible to see with how much qualification and misconception the plain first fact of Christianity has been weakened and covered up — the clear first fact that the life of Jesus Christ was meant to be the pattern of the lives of all of those who called themselves His followers. Even our devout reverence of His divinity has

often been allowed to hide the certainty that that life of the Gospels was a real human life, capable of being pattern and inspiration to these human lives of ours. The very sinlessness of Jesus has made Him seem to many not to be man, instead of standing as it was meant to stand, the type of what all manhood had been made at first, and of what all men must come to be. But the very principle of the Incarnation, that without which it loses all its value, surely is this, that Christ was Himself the first Christian; that in Him was first displayed the power of that grace by which all who believed in Him were afterwards to be helped and saved. And so the life of Jesus was lived in the closest contact with His fellow-men. The strange temptation in the desert was only the typal scene of all His life. He was always "seeing the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them," so realizing the highest temptations to which our nature is open; always "feeling an hungered," so entering into the lowest enticements that tell upon our human flesh. If He had soared like an angel over this troubled city of humanity, up above its smoke and dust, and then had stood with white garments on the hills beyond, His purity would have been only a mockery, and His Incarnation would not have been spiritually real; but if He walked through the same muddy streets of sordid care and penetrated the same murky atmosphere of passion that we have to go through, and thence came out pure and unspotted from the world, then He is really God manifest in the flesh. You say His victory was too easy to be a type of ours. But how do you know? Can you read the story of the temptation, and give any reality to it, without feeling that there may have been there a struggle as far beyond

any of ours in its intensity as the triumph outwent any of ours in its perfectness. But make it as divinely easy as you will, still that very ease is set before us as the thing we are to attain to, without which we are not to be satisfied. Christ is tolerant of any feebleness and slowness but not of any abandonment of the desire and design. No prospect short of this must bound our view. As He came forth spotless, so by His power we must come out unstained at last, and "walk with Him in white."

Filling ourselves with this idea, then, that the spotlessness of the Saviour's life is the pattern of the spotless life to which we must aspire, — if we begin to study it, I think the first thing that strikes us about it is its positiveness. I feel, at once, as I read the story of Jesus, that he was not continually on the defensive. He was not continually standing guard over his own purity, and defending it from attack. There are two ways of defending a castle: one by shutting yourself up in it, and guarding every loophole; the other by making it an open centre of operations from which all the surrounding country may be subdued. Is not the last the truest safety? Jesus was never guarding himself, but always invading the lives of others with His holiness. There never was such an open life as His, and yet the force with which His character and love flowed out upon the world, kept back, more strongly than any granite wall of prudent caution could have done, the world from pressing in on Him. His life was like an open stream that keeps the sea from flowing up into it by the eager force with which it flows down into the sea. He was so anxious that the world should be saved that therein was His salvation from the world. He labored so to make the world pure

that He never even had to try to be pure Himself. Health issued from Him so to the sick who touched His garments that He was in no danger of their infection coming in to Him. This was the positiveness of His sinlessness. He did not spend His life in trying not to do wrong. He was too full of the earnest love and longing to do right, — to do His Father's will.

And so we see, by contrast, how many of our attempts at purity fail by their negativeness. A man knows that drink is ruining him, soul and body, and he makes up his mind that he will not drink again. How soon the empty hour grows wearisome, and his feet, having no other direction given to them, and tired of mere standing still, have carried him back to the old corner, and he is at the bar with the full glass in his hand again. I do think that we break almost all our resolutions not to do wrong, while we keep a large proportion of our resolutions that we will do what is right. Habit, which is the power by which evil rules us, is only strong in a vacant life. It is the empty, swept, and garnished house to which the devils come back to hold still higher revel. And even if we could resist the evil by merely holding out against it, still should we not be like castles protecting themselves, but conquering and enriching no country around their walls? Some people seem to be here in the world just on their guard all the while, always so afraid of doing wrong that they never do anything really right. They do not add to the world's moral force; as the man, who, by constant watchfulness over his own health, just keeps himself from dying, contributes nothing to the world's vitality. All merely negative purity has something of the taint of the impurity that

it resists. The effort not to be frivolous is frivolous itself. The effort not to be selfish is very apt to be only another form of selfishness.

This seems to me to be really what has often been meant when people have drawn strong contrasts between morality and religion. Morality is apt to be conceived as negative. Religion is, by its very nature, positive. Morality is to religion what the Old Testament is to the New, what the Law is to the Gospel. And so religion is higher than morality, as manly virtue is nobler than child-like innocence. It is a delusion and a weakness for you, O man of forty, to be wishing back again your boyhood, before the world had stained and spotted you. Manhood is better than boyhood, and the true old age than the truest youth. Of course the building was strong and beautiful before the fire on Saturday morning; but to have stood through the fire, and to give up its treasures, unhurt, out of the safe, on Monday morning, after the fire, that was the real beauty and strength. So we are sure at once, and we learn it certainly from Christ, that the true spotlessness from the world must come, not negatively, by the garments being drawn back from every worldly contact, but positively, by the garments being so essentially, divinely pure that they fling pollution off, as sunshine, hurrying on its mission to the world, flings back the darkness that tries to stop its way.

And what then? Is any such purity as Christ's, so positive, so strong, possible for us? As I said a few moments ago, if our religion cannot help us to it, then our religion fails of its task. Now let me try to show you what the faith of Christ can do for us, if we will let it, to make us so strong that the contaminations of

the world cannot affect us. I am sure that there are some of us who have come here, conscious of stains and wounds from the hard conflicts of the week, who do indeed desire to know how they can be stronger and purer.

In the first place, Christianity is a religion of the supernatural, and, to any one who is thoroughly in its power, it must bring the presence of a live supernaturalism, and make that the atmosphere of his life. You cannot bring Christ's religion down, and make it a thing of this world. That first truth of the Incarnation is the controlling truth of the Christian faith. Behind, before all knowledge of why Christ came into this world, what He came to do, there must always be the fact that He did come, that the wall between the two worlds was broken, the gulf between God and man was bridged, and that to the soul of every mortal who saw Christ the spiritual world, with all its higher standards and impulses, became visible and powerful. Other religions you may bring down to mere codes of worldly wisdom. Christianity is supernatural, or it is nothing. The Incarnation is its essential heart, by which it lives and moves and has its being. And what then? What the poor creature needs who is standing right in the midst of the world's defilements, catching them on every side, is it not just this: the clear, sure certainty of another world, of a spiritual world with spiritual purity for its law? It is very much as if you went out of the pure, sweet, sensitive home-life in which you have been bred, into the lowest, grossest, filthiest pollution of the city. Suppose you had to live there a week, a month. What would keep you pure from its defilement? Would it not be

the constant sense, the ever-present vision of that higher realm of life that you had come from, making your present home seem dreadful to you? Would not the very knowledge that such a higher realm of life existed be your strength and protection? Nay, to alter the illustration a little, would not your presence, if you were really radiant with the purity of the better life you came from, exalt and help some poor creature there with the knowledge of the existence and the possibility of better things? And that is just the power of the Incarnation. It opened the spiritual, the supernatural, the eternal. It was as if the clouds were broken above this human valley that we live in, and men saw the Alps above them, and took courage. For, remember, it was a true Incarnation. It was a real bringing of God in the flesh. It was a real assertion of the possible union of humanity and divinity; and by all its tender and familiar incidents, by the babyhood and home life, the hungerings and thirstings of the incarnate Christ, it brought the divinity that it intended to reveal close into the hearts and houses of mankind. It made the supernatural possible as a motive in the smallest acts of men. I do not believe that there could be a God in heaven and men not know it by some movement of their hearts, and fear Him in their more solemn actions, in their governing of the nations, and their thinking about life and death; but what the Incarnation did was to bring God so near that no slightest action could hide away from Him; that every least activity of life should feel His presence, and men should not only lead their armies and make their laws, but rise up and go to sleep, walk in the street, play with their children, work in their shops,

talk with their neighbors, all in the fear and love of the Lord.

Make, then, this Incarnation the one pervading power of a man's life. Let his first feeling about this world always be, "God has been here, and so God is here still," and have you not made him strong to walk unpolluted and unscorched through the furnace of the world's most fiery corruptions? It is the low system, the constitution that is broken down and depressed in tone, that takes the contagion. The strong, really well man, walks by the house where disease is rioting, and his healthy vitality flings the distemper back. And a deep, living sense of God is the true vitality of a human soul which quenches the poisonous fires of corruption, as powerless to be hurt by it as the cold, calm sea is to be set on fire by the coals that you may cast burning into its bosom. Think of the day after Jesus had called John and Peter and Nathanael to be his servants. They had begun to hear his words of eternal life. They had become dimly conscious of so much above and beyond. Do you think it was as hard for them to pass unspotted by the places of temptation in Chorazin and Capernaum? They had tasted the powers of the world to come. And the true way, the only true way, to make any man who is a slave to this world, catching its corruption, free and pure, is to make him see another world, the supernatural world, the world of spiritual life above him and below him and stretching out before him into eternity, made visible by Christ's Incarnation.

2. But this is not enough. No mere sense of the supernatural ever saved a soul. Christ must come nearer to the soul than this before it can really by Him "escape

the corruption that is in the world." Then the e comes in all the personal relation between the soul and its Saviour. Now we must mount to think what was the purpose of the Incarnation. We must get sight of that divine pity which saw us in our sins and came to rescue us. We must understand how clear-sighted the Creator is to see and feel the need of every one among his creatures. We must grasp the bewildering thought of a personal love for our single souls. And then all must be emphasized and condensed into the world's tragedy. We must find the meaning, so unintelligible to multitudes, so precious to every soul that really has laid hold of it, in those strange words, "The Lord Jesus Christ died for me." We must see the Jesus of the cross on the cross. And what then? Do you not see? Full of profoundest gratitude the soul looks round to see what it can give to the Saviour in token of its feeling of his love. And it can find nothing. It has nothing to give. And hopeless of finding anything, it simply gives itself. It is its own no longer. It is given away to Christ. It lives His life and not its own. Can you imagine that becoming real to a man and not changing his relation to the temptations that beset him. He feels now with Christ's feeling, and corruption drops away from him as it drops away from Christ. Shame, love, hope, every good passion wakes in the soul. It walks unharmed, because it walks in this new sense of consecration. That seems to me to be the perfect ransom of a soul. When I am so thankful to Christ for all He suffered in my behalf that I give up my life to Him to show Him how I love Him, and by my dedication of myself to Him am saved from the world's low slaveries and stains, — then, it seems to me, my

heaven is begun, its security and peace I have already entered. I am already safe within its sheltering walls, and all my happy restful life takes up already its eternal psalm. Already I have "washed my robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

These are the profound ways in which men's souls are kept unspotted from the world by Christ. Do you not see how far they go beyond the feeble, fitful resolutions to resist and to reform with which we are always cheating our eager souls? But there is one more principle which seems to me so important and so true that I must take your time to tell you of it. When I ask somewhat more minutely into the method which Christ uses to keep his servants free from the world's corruption, I seem to come to something like this, which seems, like so much besides in the Gospel, at first surprising, and then sublimely natural and reasonable, that it is by a Christ-like dedication to the world that Christ really saves us from the world. Do you see what I mean? You go to your Lord, and say, "O Lord, this world is tempting me, and I fear its stains. How shall I escape it? Shall I run away from it?" And the answer comes, as unmistakable as if a voice spoke out of the opened sky, "No; go up close to this world, and help it; feel for its wickedness; pity it; sacrifice yourself for it; so shall you be safest from its infection; so shall you be surest not to sacrifice yourself to it." They say the doctors and the nurses are least likely to catch the epidemic. If you have a friend who is dishonest or impure, the surest way to save yourself from him is to try to save him. More pure and more secure in purity than the Pharisee, man or woman, who draws back the spotless skirts from the

reach of the poor fallen creature who clutches at them, is the pitying man or woman who in the nearest brotherhood or sisterhood goes close to the wretched sinner and takes him by the hand to lift him. I am not surprised to hear that the man who despises the sinner and gets as far away from him as possible has become, after all, the sharer of his sin. I am surprised if the tender sympathizer who goes to the poor slave of sin, and says, "My brother, my heart bleeds for you; let me help you,"—I am surprised if he is not armed by his pity against the contagion of the sin he tries to help, and if he does not save both his brother and himself together.

Is not this one of the most beautiful principles in all the realm of truth? I open the book of the dear and holy life again, and there I see its illustration. What was it that saved Jesus from the infection of the world? Was it not the same divinity which made him the Saviour of the world? Was He ever so strongly and purely pure as when he stood there in the temple and looked down upon the wretched woman at His feet, and said, "Neither do I condemn thee?" Was He ever so perfectly true to His Father as when He sat and sorrowed over apostate Jerusalem? It is the ineffable union of Christ with the sinner that most bears witness to Christ's sinlessness and is there not something in your own experience which testifies that the Saviour never seemed so perfectly above you in the assurance of His holiness as when He was the nearest to your side in loving pity for your sin,—never so perfectly sinless as when He was "made sin" for you?

I am sure that as we grow better and better Christians this will become more and more the source and fountain

of our strength. We shall come so close up to all the world's wickedness that it cannot strike us. We shall be saved from it by our pity for it. We shall be far from its contagion the closer that we come to its needs. We shall be as pure as the angels the more completely we give ourselves up to the ministering angels' work. This is the true positiveness of the Christian's purity the real safety of the loving and laboring life.

These, then, are the powers for our preservation. I cannot recount them without feeling anew how deep they go. Is it then true that none of us can keep himself unspotted from the world unless his life be full of reverence for God and trust in Christ and tender pity for his fellow-men? What is that but to say, that "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" Oh, what poor makeshifts all our laws and decencies and proprieties appear beside the live power of the new manhood of grace. Oh, how hard and hopeless seems the prudent, watchful, timid man, who is trying to save himself by constant self-denials, beside the new freeman of the Lord Jesus Christ, full of the high ambitions and sure hopes of the heavenly life.

Some of the world's dangers change from age to age. Our own time has its own forms of danger, and it is free from some that once beset our fathers. But so long as the world is still the world, the great mass of its corrupt influence is still the same. Lust, falsehood, cruelty, injustice, selfishness, these are about us as they were about Noah and Abraham and Moses. But it is possible to be so given up to Christ and to fellow-man that they shall not hurt us. It is possible for us to walk through the fire and not be burned but it depends always and wholly

upon whether He walks there with us. Let us not trust ourselves, for we are weakness. Let us trust Him, and work for all who need us, for so shall we go pure through all impurity, and come at last home, where the children shall be safe forever in the Father's house, the sheep gathered forever into the Shepherd's fold.

XI.

A GOOD-FRIDAY SERMON

"Then were there two thieves crucified with Him. — MATT. xxvii. 38.
"I am crucified with Christ." — GAL. ii. 20.

WHOEVER reads the story of our Lord's crucifixion as we have read it here this morning feels that a part of its humiliation was that He did not suffer alone. Crucifixion was terrible and disgraceful enough in itself, but if Jesus had hung upon His cross with nothing near him to disturb the impression of His calm serenity and innocence, it might well have happened that the people who stood and watched would have lost sight of the disgrace, and would have felt the majesty of the sacrifice. Already that place of suffering might have seemed as glorious as it has seemed to the world since. An awe and wonder, almost ready to break out in thankfulness and praise, might have spread through the multitude who watched the spectacle of heroism and love. But, as it was, they went to the prison and dragged out two wretched culprits who were waiting for their doom. That there might be no doubt about the disgracefulness of the Saviour's sufferings, they hung Him between two thieves. One on the right hand and the other on the left, those malefactors advertised the ignominy of His pain. Their friends, the thieves and roughs of Jerusalem, were side by side with His disciples in the crowd. The loathing of all honest

men was heaped upon them, and He, hanging there with them, in the same condemnation, was covered with the mantle of their sin. He had come into their lot. He bore their curse. He took His share in their disgrace when He was crucified with them.

It was not many years afterward that the great St Paul, whose life had become wonderful to himself as he saw under what new motives and to what new purpose it was lived since he became a disciple of Jesus, when he tried to sum up that life and tell the beauty of its association with his Lord, used this strange language: "I am crucified with Christ." His life was full of suffering, and suffering which had to do with sin. He found himself every day "dying to the world," that is, separated by self-sacrifice and pain from the wicked things about him. In all that suffering, which was at once the token and the means of higher life, he felt himself drawn towards and taken into the experience of his Master. As he was suffering, so Jesus had suffered. As he by his suffering was able at once to bear his testimony against, to separate himself from, and also to help the sinful world, so Jesus had declared, upon His cross, at once His holiness and His pity. Paul saw in his ministry of self-sacrifice a dim, imperfect, far-off echo of his Lord's, and so he told the story of his new life in the terms of the story of that life into which it had entered, and he said, "I am crucified with Christ."

I have brought these two passages together, because, in their union, they bring out the complete truth on which we wish to dwell upon Good-Friday. The cross before which we stand to-day has both its humiliation and its glory. It is a tragedy that bewilders and dis-

mays us. It is likewise a proclamation of peace and hope. In the degradation of Christ, which compelled Him to be crucified with the thieves, there is a picture of how very low He stooped to our condition. In the triumph of Paul, at his participation with Christ, we see how the believer is taken into his Master's privilege. The two belong together. Christ was humiliated into our condition that we might be exalted unto His. Christ was crucified with man that man might rejoice in being crucified with Christ. Both the depth to which He went to seek man and the height up to which He would carry man, were set forth in the cross. Alas for him who, standing on Good-Friday and looking at the crucifixion, does not see both of these, does not learn at once how low his Saviour went to find him, and how high he may go if he will make his Saviour's life his own! Let us look at both the scenes. Let us try to understand both thoughts, — Christ's crucifixion with man, and man's crucifixion with Christ, — and bind them both together in one humbling and inspiring truth.

Turn, then, first, to the cross upon Calvary, and let us think about Christ's crucifixion with man. In the prison at Jerusalem there are two robbers lying, waiting for their death. It is sure to come. Their crimes have doomed them to it. As they look back over their miserable lives they can see how from their boyhood, when their vice began, they have been steadily and certainly moving on towards this destiny. Their sin has deepened, and, with their deepening sin, the darkness of the coming death has gathered round them. They have known whither they were going. They have known that some time or other a life like theirs must bring a violent

death. There is no record of their names, or anything about them. We do not separate or individualize them. To us, as they sit there in prison, they are simply wicked men waiting for the death which their wickedness has brought upon them. And now, at last, the time has come. The last morning dawns upon them. Sin is finished, and, on this solemn Good-Friday, it brings forth death. The soldiers are at the door, and the crosses are waiting. You see how general, how typical, how little personal it all is. It is not these two men come to the ruin which their special sin deserves. It is wickedness, which, by the terrible necessity of its nature, has brought forth death. And now with the black record of this wickedness in your minds, think of another life which comes to its crisis on this same Good-Friday. There has been a man living in Palestine here for thirty years, and He has never done a sin. Nay, more than that, He has amazed the eyes of men with a positive holiness, a picture of what it is to be absolutely good, such as they never dreamed of. This spotless, strong, pure goodness has all been poured out in love. The life has been all self-sacrifice. He has never seemed to think of Himself. Health and truth have gone out from Him to whoever touched Him. A life like the shining of the sun! A life of which, as men looked at it, they have felt that in it their best dreams of humanity were surpassed, — that in it there was something more than human. Last night Jesus of Nazareth had sat with his disciples, and talked with them in words of spiritual wisdom which have ever since been the wonder of the world. They had gone out then, together, to the Garden of Gethsemane There Jesus had plead with God, in agony, while His dis-

ciples slept with weariness and sorrow. By and by the soldiers came and took Jesus, and carried Him away to the High Priest. After that He was wholly separated from His friends,—from everybody that believed in Him and loved Him. From the High Priest's house, where He is insulted and taunted, He is sent early on this Friday morning to the Governor's. There He is confronted with the cold, brutal unbelief of the Roman magistrate. He is sent to Herod, and back again to Pilate, walking the familiar streets in disgrace and desertion. Then He is scourged. Then the people demand His blood. At last the Governor yields to them, and, with the sentence of a criminal, He is led away, and his procession meets the procession in which the two thieves are led to death, and they are crucified together.

There, then, are the two stories. See how far apart they begin. One in the innocence of perfect holiness; the other in the blackest wickedness. And then see how they meet at last. As when a black and turbid stream goes hurrying towards a cavern's gloom, into which it is destined to plunge itself out of sight, and just before it reaches its dark doom, a pure, fresh river that was born among the snows in the sunlight on the mountain's top, and has sung its way down through flowers, drops its quiet, transparent waters into the tumultuous current, and shares its plunge,—so the pure holiness of Christ fell into the stream of human wickedness, and shared its fate. The Saviour's life entered into the life of humanity at its blackest. He had left behind heaven; He had left behind even the little heavenliness which he had found upon the earth. All the disciples had forsaken Him, and fled. The little flicker of sympathy which He

had seen upon the face of Pilate, He had lost now. He had come to the company of robbers. There were two thieves crucified with Him.

That is the sight which we behold as we look at these three crosses standing out sharp and terrible against the sky. Into the darkest of earth's darkness, into the deepest consequences of sin where it was possible for innocence to go, the Incarnate One has gone. Our Immanuel, our God with us, is with the worst of us in his most awful misery. No child of God shall know any suffering which this love shall not fathom to its depths with Him. No pain, except the purely personal pain of remorse, which it is eternally impossible that innocence should feel, no pain but that, shall there be anywhere upon the earth, of which any agonized soul shall be able to cry out to his Saviour and say, "Do not mock me with your pity. You do not know what my pain is." And even something as like remorse as is that profound contrition which comes to a brother when his brother sins, or to a father when a child is lost, even the woe which comes of such identification with the sinner as leaves out nothing save his sin, share, even that last pain of life, which only they who have something divine in them can feel, even that the Divine One endured, and set forth before us in his crucifixion between the robbers.

Once in the hours while he hung there, a cry of desolation, abandonment, and disgrace, burst from the sufferer's lips. "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" He cries, making His own the words of an old psalm of woe. When I read what men have written to explain the meaning of Jesus in that cry, I always feel anew how

much deeper than our comprehension went his identification with humanity when He plunged into the darkness of its sin. "He was made flesh!" Into what mysterious contact with the sinfulness to which the flesh of man had given itself that being made flesh brought him, I know no man has ever fathomed. If I try to fathom it at all, I can only picture to myself the most Christlike act, the most Messianic entrance into the strange and dreadful fate of other men which my imagination can conceive. Let me suppose that the purest woman in this town, the most sensitive and scrupulous, moved by a sense of sisterhood and by a longing pity, gathers up all her life and goes and lives among the lowest and most brutal and most foul savages that this earth contains. As she enters their land she leaves her own life behind. She accepts their life. Everything, except their wickedness, she makes her own. She sacrifices her fastidiousness every day. She finds herself the victim of habits which are the consequences of long years of sin. No sensibility that is not shocked, no fine and pure taste that is not wounded. Her common human nature with these savages asserts itself to her every day. But the very depth of the union into which she comes with them by her pity makes her all the more sensitive to the horror of their life. Their sin is awful to her, not only because of her own purity, but because of the keen understanding of its awfulness, which comes from her profound oneness of nature with these sinners. She cannot stand off and look at them and work for them from a safe distance. She is one of them in their common humanity. In every foul wickedness of theirs she suffers. She bears their sins a heavy burden on her heart. Is it strange that she

comes by and by to feel the wretchedness and woe of that island taking complete possession of her? Is it strange that, — though she knows that the sweet home across the sea, which she has left, is just as sweet as ever, and that her friends there are loving her, and have not forgotten her a moment, — the awful load she carries, the frightful atmosphere of vice that reeks around her, should seem sometimes to shut her in to desolation and shut her out from every higher life and all pure love, so that when this mood is darkest she should stand some day upon the beach, and, without any faithlessness to her task, or any distrust of the friends at home, cry out across the sea to them, "Oh, why have you forsaken me?" Do not imagine that I think that any human sacrifice can truly image His surrender, or any human pain declare the measure of His woe. But this is surely the best that earth can show us of the kind of agony with which the Christ who, in His love, had gone down to the deepest and most terrible depths of humanity, even to being crucified between two thieves, seemed for a moment to have lost himself, and cried out to the Father, with whom He was eternally and inseparably one, "Oh, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If the cry bewilders as we try to comprehend the deity to which it appeals, it may at least reveal to us something of the depth out of which it ascends.

Such then is the story of Christ's crucifixion in and with and for humanity. It is no fantastic conception of the imputation to Him of a sinfulness which was not His, of God's counting Him guilty of wickedness which He had never done. It is something infinitely, awfully more real than that. It is that the God who made man in His own image, coming to the life of man, found that image

all broken and lost. He came into men's life and found them dying for their sin. He was guiltless of their sin, but He entered with consummate intensity of suffering into their death, as the pure soul which I pictured in that foul savage island must feel the horror of the misery which vice has brought there more than its inhabitants, just in proportion as it was free from the vice with which they are polluted. It was a sin not His own which He bore upon the cross. Think, if you can, how an incarnation in a world wholly free from sin would have closed, and the Incarnate One gone up to His eternal glory, and then you have some conception of what sin has done in this world. Can we see God come among a race that does not know what sin is, and, having shared its life, at last stand ready to withdraw His presence from their sight? Think of the scene of gratitude and love. Can we not see the joyous thankful company of mortals, as with triumphant songs of praise they bring their Lord and friend up to the noblest height of earth, and with hearts full of trust that He could never leave them wholly, see His form depart out of their view? How different it all is now! Instead of this scene, there is the cross on Calvary! Instead of God with His noblest creatures among the noblest scenes of earth, in sympathy of common holiness, here is the Son of God beside the vilest of mankind upon the cross of shame. Ah, my dear friends, there is the terrible consummate testimony of what sin is. We trace its power everywhere else. We see its woe. We learn to hate it, but we come to the profoundest knowledge and the profoundest hatred of it when we come to this, that it crucified the Son of God with wicked men, it made Jesus the sharer of our human woe. Sin did this.

Whose sin? What sin? Then it is that the terrible identity of sin comes out. Here in the presence of God's suffering and dying Son the oneness of God's family is clear. All that we have ever done that has helped to make the world a different place from that holy ground on which the Holy God might have walked in perfect sympathy with His obedient children, all our wilfulness, all our disobedience, all our untruth, all our passion, all our lust, all our selfishness, all our wickednesses which we call little wickednesses at home or in the street, they all take their place in, they all declare their oneness with, that sin which brought Christ to the cross. It is our punishment that He shares. It is our woe down into which His love has brought Him. We hang upon our cross and He hangs on His beside us. For our cross we can blame none but ourselves. Our sin has brought us what we suffer, but His cross no sin of His has built. It is the wickedness in which we have so deep a part, which decrees that it shall be a cross and not a throne. There comes, as the result of all, just exactly what is expressed in the strange deep words of the penitent thief to his mocking comrade, — words which the soul may turn and address to itself, invoking from itself a solemn repentance and hate of sin as it sees its Saviour a sharer in the suffering which its sin brings: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss."

But it is time now that we should turn to the other aspect of the cross. I have tried to depict the meaning of Christ crucified with man, the Son of God entering into the shame and pain of human sin. Now hear

St. Paul. A few short years have passed away. The crucifixion of Jesus has been illuminated by the resurrection, the ascension, and the Pentecost. It has become already, in the minds of hundreds of men and women, a dear and glorious event. Behind its shame and pain it has opened a heart of love and glory, and St. Paul, summing up his life in its best privileges and holiest purposes, says, "I am crucified with Christ." You see how great the difference is. Before, when Christ was crucified with the two thieves, it was the Son of God brought down into the misery and shame of man. Now, when Paul is crucified with Jesus, it is a man brought up into the glory of the Son of God. Evidently there must be another side, a side of privilege and delight, to this great tragedy, or else we should not hear a man cry with a tone of exultation, such as this, "Lo, I am crucified with Christ." And it is something which, strange as it would have seemed to any one who stood before the cross on Good-Friday, has grown most familiar to the Christian since. What does it mean? Is it not this: that as Christ, by his self-sacrifice, entered into the company of man, so there is a self-surrender by which man enters into the company of Christ. He came down to us, and tasted on our cross the misery of sin. We may go up to His cross, and taste, with Him, the glory and peace of perfect obedience and communion with God.

For even the dullest, as he stands before the crucifixion, gets some dim impression that there are two different elements there, — one dreadful, and one beautiful. There is what Christ is made for us, the victim, torn and tortured and distressed, and there is what Christ is in Himself, and what he wants to make us, — the loving,

peaceful son of God. Christ surrendered Himself and became the first. We, if we can surrender ourselves, may become the second, and share the glory of His crucifixion. It is a strange thought to many, but it is a thought that grows very dear to the souls that really enter into it, that there was something in the crucifixion which it is our highest privilege if we can share. Hanging there in mockery and pain, there was still something in the heart of Jesus which made it the richest heart in all the world; something which, if by any crucifixion we can gather into our hearts, we shall be rich indeed. See what it was. First, the truth of the cross must have been divinely and completely present with him. That truth was the love of God. All the memory of the past, all the way in which, from the beginning of sin, mercy had been making ready to meet the sin, all the development, age after age, of the design of pity, which at last had come here to its consummation, — all this must have filled the soul of Jesus, and, in the midst of His pain, comforted and strengthened Him. It is not for us to speak of what the mystery of Incarnation means, but we cannot help believing that there came to Christ, then, such knowledge of the Godhood in which He belonged as could come only to that one point in the moral universe where the Eternal Holiness was suffering for human sin. The truth of the cross, the truth of the love of God, inexhaustible and tireless, was with Him in His sufferings.

And beside the truth of the cross there must have been the consciousness of the cross, a clear and satisfying knowledge of his own present position, the consciousness of obedience. He was doing His Father's will.

Behind every pain, behind every shame, that certainty must have rested as an abiding strength. We must know more of the soul of Jesus than we do, before we can understand what strength came to Him from that consciousness. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work," He had said when He was preaching and working miracles; but now, when the will had culminated in this suffering, and He was dying because He must obey, there must have been a strength and nourishment in the conscious obedience that overwhelmed and sank the weakness of the flesh.

And besides these there must have been the vision of the cross. It is impossible that the Redeemer, dying for mankind, should not have seen the redeemed world stretching out before Him. "If I be lifted up," he had said "I shall draw all men unto me." When He was lifted up He must have seen them gathering. All the far ends of the earth, all the far ends of history, all the new depths of experience that should be stirred, — these must have lain open before Him. There must have flowed strength in upon Him from that vision. It was worth while, indeed, with such result before it. No pang was too great to be borne, when by the suffering of each new pang his soul climbed to the height of yet a little wider vision. Only He who sees to the end, and knows how wide and how deep the power of redemption is to go, can tell how the vision from the cross upheld and strengthened the soul of the Redeemer.

The truth of the cross, the consciousness of the cross, the vision of the cross; the Father's love, His own obedience, the world's redemption, — these were in the soul of the Saviour, sustaining it, feeding it, while he was

dying. These made the glorious side of the crucifixion And yet they were a part of the crucifixion. They were not something wholly foreign, like the wine and myrrh given to the sufferer to sustain Him. He reached them by, He found them in, His suffering. His death, and all that went with it, the sacrifice of ease and favor and delight, they brought to Him the assurance of love, the joy of obedience, the promise of redemption — the truth, the consciousness, and the vision of the cross. Can you not see, then, what a light pours into St. Paul's words, "I am crucified with Christ"? It is no cry of pain, though the fact of pain is in it. It is not a shout of triumph. It is too full of pain for that. But it is a deep and satisfied assurance that through the pain, through distress and death to much which he had loved, he has found what his Saviour found upon His cross, — the love of God, the consciousness of obedience, the vision of a world redeemed. He had suffered for Christ, but by his suffering for Christ he had, giving up his own joy which was earthly and selfish, entered into Christ's joy which is heavenly and full of love. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He had left his own life at the foot of the cross. He had climbed up to his dying Lord, and shared His death unto sin; but in sharing that, he had shared also the new life unto holiness, and entered into the truth of love, the consciousness of obedience, and the vision of the world redeemed. That was what Good-Friday meant to St. Paul.

And is it possible that Good-Friday should mean all that to us? Indeed it is. I hope that it does mean all that to many and many a one of you who have joined

in this morning's solemn worship. May I not hope that even in this morning's worship the deep meaning has for the first time opened its light to some of you? You are crucified with Christ. What shall that mean? That you share His pain? Oh yes! — all the separation from sin, all the self-sacrifice by which alone you could preserve your own purity and help your brethren, has been in you the renewal, the echo, of that terrible giving of Himself for truth and man which Christ accomplished. But if, as you have sacrificed yourself in any way, there has come into you the rich divine assurance of God's love, the deep and peaceful joy in obeying God, and far bright hopes for your humanity, broken but glorious prospects of what an obedience, perfect where yours is stumbling, complete where yours is partial, shall some day make this world to be; if all this has come to you upon your cross, as it came to the Lord on His, then the glory as well as the grief of the crucifixion is renewed in you, and the satisfaction as well as the pain of your new life is uttered when you say, in soft and solemn words, "I, too, am crucified with Christ."

I see a man setting himself against temptation, conquering his sins, giving up the world for his Lord. It is a struggle full of pain. His heart and flesh fail him. How can he bear what breaks his whole strength down? And then there comes to him the picture of the Master's crucifixion, and, humbly associating his own pain with the pain of Him on whose strength he relies, he says, "I am crucified with Christ." But as I watch him I am sure that something new is coming to him. Deep down in that pain of his he finds most unexpected treasures. He learns how God loves him. He finds the absolute

happiness of doing God's will whatever be its consequence. And, drawn into the spiritual life, he sees the future glory of the world when Jesus shall be its King. He knows all this as he never could have known it save by self-sacrifice. Somebody meets him and pities him, and he says, "Oh you do not know; I am crucified indeed; there is pain enough, struggle enough; but I am crucified with Christ. What came to Him upon His cross has come to me on mine. He has lifted me up into His privilege. It is a glorious thing to be crucified with Christ."

You have your cross, my friend. You do not serve your Lord without surrender. There is pain in the duty which you do. But if in all your pain you know that God's love is becoming a dearer and plainer truth to you, and that you are finding the pleasure of obeying God; and that the vision of the world's redemption is growing more certain and bright, then you can be more than brave; you can triumph in every task, in every sacrifice. Your cross has won something of the glory and beauty of your Lord's. Rejoice and be glad, for you are crucified with Christ.

This, then, is the full truth of Good-Friday: Jesus was crucified with us, that we might be crucified with Him. He entered into our pain, that we might enter into His peace. He shared the shame of the thieves, that Paul might share His glory. This double truth was manifest at the time of Christ's suffering. You remember the penitent thief. As their crosses were lifted side by side, he saw Christ entering into his wretchedness. Before the feeble, tortured breath had left the body, he had entered into Christ's glory. First Christ was crucified with him, and afterwards he was crucified with Christ.

The saved souls that have followed have entered deeper than he entered then into the knowledge of the Lord; but even then, in one of those in whom was shown the wretchedness of sin, was likewise shown the power of the new salvation.

And now the scene of that terrible day has come back to us once more. We have knelt under its shadow together. Oh, my dear people, have we indeed entered into its double truth? Christ on this day entered into our shame. Deep into its very heart He entered. The blackness of its darkness was around Him. But the purpose of His sacrifice was that we might be brought to Him. We have not learnt the whole if we have only felt His condescension. Not till He who has stooped to us has lifted us up to Him must we be satisfied. Not till He who hangs upon the cross beside us has said to us, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Oh, that by God's grace we may to-day accept anew His sacrifice for us and give ourselves to Him through every self-surrender, that He may do for us all that He died to do

XII.

AN EASTER SERMON.

"And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." —Rev. i. 17, 18.

There is only one subject for to-day. Upon this morning when the grave was broken and Jesus Christ arose, His resurrection with all that it means for us must claim our thoughts. Instinctively the minds of all men turn that way. I think that many men who could not help hesitating if you asked them whether they really believed in the historical fact of Christ's arising from the dead, and men whose whole habit of thought is material, bound up with forces that the eye and hand can measure, still feel a certain sense of exaltation, the leaping of some unknown spiritual possibility when Easter morning opens on the earth. It is something that mortal men have been able even to imagine an immortality, and to find pleasure in telling one another that one at least of all the billions who have died and been buried has broken through the tomb and lived upon the earth again. I am sure that many men, blindly believing, who could tell little of what the Resurrection really means, have yet got at the heart of its meaning this morning in a sense of freedom and openness, of the largeness of life and the liveness of God, which they have not felt, per

haps, since last Easter Day. Easter is remarkable for this, that it seems to take the most stupendous thoughts and through the familiar personality of Jesus bring them to men's apprehension and affection. "Christ is arisen!" "Christ is arisen!" Men say to one another. "Arisen!" Do we know what that means? The one invincible power of the world conquered! The one inevitable fate of man avoided! Death tasted and then laid aside like a cup that the lips would not drink! The most inexorable of natural laws, as we call them, broken through! Life and divinity claiming their preëminence! These are stupendous thoughts. And yet our souls are holding them to-day. The very children have taken these stupendous thoughts into their simple minds. They have been made real to us through the personal experience of Christ whom we love, and they have been translated by our own instincts and the prophecies of our own needs. It is to those who have gone up the path to the empty tomb full of love for Jesus that the great truth of His resurrection has been shown, and their own truest longings have been made beautiful and clear. Just as these flowers have taken the infinite and mysterious forces of nature, and put them into these clear shapes of visible beauty, so Easter, the flower of the year, takes the immeasurable truths of life and immortality, and holds them to us in a beauty that we all can see and love.

I have taken for my Easter text the account which Christ gives of Himself after His resurrection and ascension. It is evident to any thoughtful reader of the Gospels that, with all their joy in their risen Lord, the disciples were in a strange bewilderment and puzzle all the time that they were with Him. They loved Him

just as much as ever, but they could not seem to lay hold of Him as they used to when He walked with them and talked with them, and they were first learning of His nature and His love. After His resurrection He eludes them. Their hearts burned within them in His company, but He went and came in strange, mysterious ways. They pondered His mystical and subtle words, and always seemed to be trying to find out fully what this Lord of theirs who had arisen from the dead really was. Evidently He was something more than they had thought Him when they followed Him in Galilee. And all the Christian world, since, has echoed their loving curiosity, and longed to know more of the conqueror of death and the Saviour of the world. It is good for us to have this passage in the Revelation, in which Christ speaks, and declares Himself, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death." Let us try to see something of the meaning of that sublime self-description of the risen Christ. See what Christ says of Himself then.

First, "I am He that liveth." That word, "liveth," is a word of continuous, perpetual life. It describes the eternal existence which has no beginning and no end; which, considered in its purity and perfectness, has no present and no past, but one eternal and unbroken present, — one eternal now. It is the "I Am" of the Jehovah who spoke to Moses. "He that liveth" is the Living One; He whose life is The Life, complete in itself, and including all other lives within itself. My dear friends, if anything has come to us to make us feel what a fragmentary thing our human life is, I think there is no greater knowledge for us to win than that the life

of one who loves us as Christ loves us is an eternal life, with the continuance and the unchangeableness of eternity. See how we alter; how we make plans and finish them, or give them up; how we slip on from one stage of our career into another; how past, present, and future are forever confusing our existence; how we die, and others come on in our places to run through the same mystery and bewilderment of change that we have run. How our heads ache and our hearts ache with it all sometimes. "Is this living?" we exclaim. "This is merely touching upon life. Is it living? Is it not like the touching of an insect on the surface of a river that is hundreds of miles long? His wing just brushes it at one point in its long course, and ruffles it for a second, and then is gone again, and that is all he has to do with it. And that is all we have to do with life. Is this living?" And then there comes this voice from Christ: "I am He that liveth," He declares — continuous, eternal life. There is a large, long life that is not transitory. When we know that, then, just as the children's lives set themselves into the life of their father which seems to them really eternal; just as the leaves coming and going, growing and dropping, find their reason and consistency in the long, unchanging life of the tree on which they grow; so our lives find their place in this long, unchanging life of Christ, and lose the vexation of their own ever-shifting pasts and futures in the perpetual present of His being. It is the thought of an eternal God that really gives consistency to the fragmentary lives of men, the fragmentary history of the world. A Christ that liveth redeems and rescues into His eternity the broken, temporary lives and works of His disciples.

That is the first thing, then. This Christ is He that liveth. But then go on. See what a wonderful thing comes next. "I am He that liveth, and was dead." We do not begin to know how wonderful that is. Remember the eternally living, the very life of all lives. And yet into that life of lives death has come, — as an episode, an incident. I do not speak now of the immense provocation, the immense love that brought so strange a thing as the submission to death on the part of the Ever-living One. I speak only of this, that when death came to Him it was seen to be not the end of life, but only an event in life. It did not close His being, but it was only an experience which that being underwent. That spiritual existence which had been going on forever, on which the short existences of men had been strung into consistency, now came and submitted itself to that which men had always been submitting to. And lo! instead of being what men had feared it was, what men had hardly dared to hope that it was not, the putting out of life, it was seen to be only the changing of the circumstances of life, without any real power over the real principle of life; any more power than the cloud has over the sun that it obscures; or than the ocean has over the bubble of air that it buries fathoms deep, but whose buoyant nature it cannot destroy, nor hinder it from struggling towards and sometime reaching to the surface of the watery mass that covers it. That was the wonder of Christ's death. As He drew near to it He himself trembled. It was an experience of all His creation, but He had never felt it. To His humanity, His assumed flesh, it seemed terrible. Gethsemane bears witness how terrible it seemed. But He passed into it for love of us

And as He came out from it He declared its nature. "It is an experience of life, not an end of life. Life goes on through it and comes out unharmed. Look at me. I am He that liveth, and was dead!"

But this is not all. Still the description goes on and unfolds itself. "He that liveth, and was dead," Christ says, "and behold I am alive for evermore." This existence after death is special, and different. It is not a mere reassertion of what had been already included in His great word, "I am He that liveth." It is something added. It is an assurance that in the continued life which has once passed through the experience of death there is something new, another sympathy, the only one which before could have been lacking with his brethren whose lot it is to die, and so a helpfulness to them which could not otherwise have been, even in His perfect love. This new life, — the life that has conquered death by tasting it, which has enriched itself with a before unknown sympathy with men whose lives are forever tending towards and at last all going down into the darkness of the grave, — this life stretches on and out forever. It is to know no ending. So long as there are men living and dying, so long above them and around them there shall be the Christ, the God-man, who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore.

And now think what that great self-description of the Saviour means, and what it is to us. What do we need, we men? Ah, the happiest and most satisfied lives among us have had some glimpses into the depths of their own unsatisfactoriness; and the most eager and earnest, and the sick and the suffering, live in the consciousness of their deep wants all the time. Here are

we poor waifs upon the earth, — here with our fragments of existence, — here with the mystery of our beginning and the half-understood purpose of our being here at all; and dark, clear, inevitable before all of us there is looming up the mighty wall of death. In through its narrow door every one of the millions who has lived has passed. Up to that same door every one of us is walking. Each throbbing second is a footfall that brings us up a little nearer. And beyond? Not one of those we have seen enter has come back to tell us what there is beyond, to tell us that there really is any such beyond as that at which our resolute, unreasonable vitality guesses and hopes in spite of all the darkness. This is man's life. Just think of it. And then, as you sit thinking of his fragmentariness, his certainty of death, his doubt about a future, let this voice come to you, a voice clear with personality, and sweet and strong with love: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and am alive for evermore." "He that liveth!" And at once your fragment of life falls into its place in the eternity of life that is bridged by His being. "He that was dead!" And at once death changes from the terrible end of life into a most mysterious but no longer terrible experience of life. "He that is alive for evermore!" And not merely there is a future beyond the grave, but it is inhabited by One who speaks to us, who went there by the way that we must go, who sees us and can help us as we make our way along, and will receive us when we come there. Is not all changed? The devils of discontent, despair, selfishness, sensuality, how they are scattered before that voice, really heard, of the risen and everlasting Christ. He stands before the door of His tomb and speaks, and

these dark forms that have enchained the souls and fettered the activities of men fall on their faces, like the Roman soldiers, who in the gray dawn of the morning saw Him come forth from the tomb of the Arimathean, and trembled with fright, and knew that their day was over, and that the prisoner they thought was dead was indeed too strong for them to keep. Would God I could make you hear that voice on this Easter morning!

And yet we have not finished all our Lord's description of Himself, though we have been led on to anticipate in part what He has still to say. We have talked thus far only of Christ's resurrection. We have not spoken of the resurrection of His disciples which He makes clear and certain by His own. But see how He goes on: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. And I have the keys of hell and of death." Hell of course means just Hades, that unseen place, that place of departed spirits in which our creed expresses its belief. Christ then, having experienced death, has the keys of death to open its meaning, and to guide the way through it for those who are to die like Him. It is because He died that He holds the keys of death. Can we not understand that? Do we not know how any soul that has passed through a great experience holds the keys of that experience, so that as He sees another coming up to it just as ignorantly and fearfully as he came, he can run up to this new-comer and open the door for him, show him on what side this experience is best entered, lead him through the dark passages of it where he could not easily find his way alone, and at last bring him out into the splendor of the light beyond. I am tempted to stop and think of this with you for a mo-

ment, by the way, for this is what binds men's lives most closely and most vitally together. Suppose you have had a life of great sorrow. Or, suppose you have had some one great sorrow in your life. It is not a mere supposition. I look into your faces and I know how true it is of many and many of you, my people. Well, you have suffered, and come through your suffering into the light. And as you stand there looking back, who is it that comes up the road where you remember to have walked years back, when you were a boy, the road that led you to your suffering? You look, and lo! another light and careless heart is coming, singing, up the road by which you came. You know where the road leads to, but he has not yet caught sight of the trial that blocks it. Suddenly he comes in sight of that trial, and starts back. He stands in fright. He trembles. He is ready to run. "Father, save me from it," you hear him cry. What can you do for him? If you are wise and willing, you go down and meet him, and you hold out before him, in some sympathetic act or word, the key of your experience. "Let me show you," you say, "not because I am any greater or better than you, but only because the Father led me there first. Let me show you the way into, the way through, and the way out of this sorrow which you cannot escape. Into it by perfect submission; through it with implicit obedience; out of it into purified passions and entire love." He sees the key in your hand. He sees the experience in your face, and so he trusts you. How useless it is to go to any brother without the key, — without the experience of that which he has got to meet. He thanks us and turns away. Who are we that we should guide him? It is so with temptation. It is so

with repentance. They who have undergone and overcome stand with their keys to open the portals of life's great emergencies to their brethren. The wondrous power of experience! And see how beautiful and ennobling this makes our sorrows and temptations. Every stroke of sorrow that issues into light and joy is God putting into your hand the key of that sorrow to unlock it for all the poor souls whom you may see approaching it, through all your future life. It is a noble thing to take that key and use it. There are no nobler lives on earth than those of men and women who have passed through many experiences of many sorts, and who now go about with calm and happy and sober faces, holding their keys, some golden and some iron, and finding their joy in opening the gates of these experiences to younger souls, and sending them into them full of intelligence and hope and trust. Such lives, I think, we may all pray to grow into as we grow older, and pass through more and more of the experiences of life.

And now this is just exactly what Jesus does for us by His resurrection. Having the keys of death and hell, He comes to us as we are drawing near to death, and He opens the doors on both sides of it, and lets us look through it, and shows us immortality. Now you see we have passed over from Himself to us. Not merely He lives forever, but so shall we; for us, too, death shall be not an end, but an experience; and beyond it for us, just as for Him, stretches immortality. Because He lives, we shall live also.

And now shall we try to tell to one another what it is to be immortal, and to know it; what it is to have death broken down so that life stretches out beyond it, the same life as this, opening, expanding, but forever the

same essentially; just as to Him that always liveth the life that He liveth evermore is the same after the death on Calvary, though with some entrance of something — some new knowledge, and the sympathy of a new experience — that was not there before? This is certainly what I want to tell on Easter Day to all these men and women who are thinking tenderly and longingly of their own dead; perhaps thinking fearfully of their own death to-day. But, as I try, I am rejoiced indeed that there is so much in the everlasting associations of the day to speak to you what I know I must fail to speak. But let me try.

And first of all I think of the immense and noble freedom from many of the most trying and vexatious of our temptations which comes to a man to whom the curtain has been lifted and the vail rent in twain. Let me fancy myself a man who has no vision beyond this world. Let me bow myself down, and shut myself in, until all the thought of my life stops sharp and short there at the grave. I am going to work along here, till when? perhaps till to-morrow morning, perhaps till fifty years hence: what matters it? Certainly for a very minute of time, and then it will be all over; what I do I must not only begin, I must finish here and now. All my desires, those deep, deep wishes that are in my soul because I am a man, the desire to accomplish something, the desire to please, the desire to discover and display myself, — all of them good desires, all of them parts of my humanity, — they must all be satisfied before the curtain falls or they can never find satisfaction, for that falling of the curtain is the end of all. What a coward I become! What a poor, timid, limited, temporary thing! I must attempt

nothing so large that I cannot finish it before the sun goes down. I must desire nothing that this life cannot bestow. If I want to please, whom shall I please? Only these cramped and crippled and half-judging men about me, to whom I must degrade myself to win their honor. If I want to make myself known, I must take this crude self which I am now, and hold it up and make that self known, for it is "now or never," since the end may come at once. How superficial, restless, impatient! what a slave I come to be! Where is my independence? How the world has me down and treads on me! — treads me into the dust and mire of the present, since I know no future world into which I can lift myself up and run away. And now beside me all the time there is another man, and the difference between him and me is this, that he believes in immortality. Somehow he has got hold of the truth of resurrection. To him, death is a jar, a break, a deep mysterious change, but not the end of life. I know that men may claim to believe that, and yet live on like dogs. Men may claim to believe that, and yet be slaves and cowards. But this man really believes it; and see what it does for him. See how free it makes him. How it breaks his tyrannies! He can undertake works of self-culture, or the development of truth, far, far too vast for the earthly life of any Methuselah to finish, and yet smile calmly and work on when men tell him that he will die before his work is done. Die! Shall not the sculptor sleep a hundred times before the statue he begins to-day is finished, and wake a hundred times more, ready for his work, bringing with a hundred new mornings to his work the strength and the visions that have come to him in his slumber? He can desire to

please, and yet be perfectly patient as he waits for a "well done" that will fall on his ears out of divine lips when this world and its shows are over. He can desire to show himself, and yet live in obscurity content, sure that some day — what does it matter when to him who has eternity to live in? — God will call him, and bid men see in him the work of love and grace. Can you picture the independence of a man like that? What are my tempta tions to him? How he walks over them with feet that follow his far-seeing sight like a man that strides with his firm steps and far-off sight and never sees the pebble in the path behind which a crawling insect is blocked and hindered. Sometimes when one is travelling through a foreign country it happens that he stops a day or two, a week or two, in some small village, where everything is local, which has little communication with the outside world; where the people are born and grow up, and grow old and die without thinking of leaving their little nest among the mountains. The traveller shares for a little while their local life, shuts himself in to their limitations. But all the while he is freer than they are; he is not tyrannized over by the small prescriptions and petty standards that are despots to them. He knows of, and belongs to, a larger world. He is kept free by the sense of the world beyond the mountains, from which he came and to which he is going back again. And so when a man, strong in the conviction of immor tality, really counts himself a stranger and a pilgrim among the multitudes who know no home, no world but this, then he is free among them; free from the worldly tyrannies that bind them; free from their temptations to be cowardly and mean. The wall of death, beyond

which they never look, is to him only a mountain that can be crossed, from whose top he shall see eternity, where he belongs. This is the freedom of the best childhood and the best old age, these two ends of life in which the sense of immortality is realest and most true.

How good it would be for us if this bright Easter Day could show us immortality and so set some of us free. There are some things that you are afraid to do, some right word you are afraid to speak, some wasteful or wicked habit you are afraid to give up, some self-culture that you are afraid to undertake, some attempt to be useful in some little enterprising way from which you shrink out of a feeble fear of what people will say about it, out of a fear of the little world. You would get rid of that fear instantly if you realized your immortality and stood in the midst of the great world of your eternal life, as the mists that have hung thick and damp in the valleys scatter and are lost as soon as they struggle up into the free air above the hill-tops. What is there in scorn or criticism, that dies the day it is born, that can terrify, however it may pain, the man who is to live forever? He is free. He has entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And so, again, the whole position of duty is elevated by the thought, the knowledge of immortality. Duty is a vast power and needs a vast world to work in. I do not deny, God forbid! I love to watch the power of duty working in a man who is unable to believe that the life he lives is any more than an insect's life. It is a dogged stoical thing, but there is something that makes us love it with a love that is all the tenderer because it is so melancholy, in the stout resolve that says, "I do not

dare to think that I shall live after this life is over, and it may be over with the next breath I draw, but nevertheless, all blind and useless as it seems, I will not do what my conscience calls a wrong thing, and I will do what my conscience says is right, while I am here upon the earth." There is something beautiful about that, but how sad and dark it is. It is a resolution for rare souls. Who ever dreams that the whole race could begin to live on an impulse of duty as frigid and austere as that? But now let Christ come to that brave man, holding the keys of death and hell. Oh, brave man, do not be so in love with your own bravery as to insist upon the hard stoical duty that knows no future, when He opens before you the spiritual future that really belongs to every dutiful deed, and shows you a world in which these hard seeds that you are sowing now will bear their fruit. It seems to me that this day is a day for strong and cheerful resolutions, because it is a day when, with the spiritual world open before us, we can all catch sight of the destiny of duty, — of how, some time or other, every good habit is to conquer and every good deed wear its crown Come, take that task of yours which you have been hesitating before, and shirking and walking around and around, and on this Easter Day lift it up and do it. It is your duty. That which sounds hard and cold on other days ought to sound warm and inspiring to-day. For to-day we can see that duty is worth while. Duty is the one thing on earth that is so vital that it can go through death and come to glory. Duty is the one seed that has such life in it that it can lie as long as God will in the mummy hand of death, and yet be ready any moment to start into new growth in the new soil where He shall set

it. So let us all consecrate our Easter Day by resolutely taking up some new duty which we know we ought to do. We bind ourselves so by a new chain to eternity, to the eternity of Him who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at God's right hand.

I had wanted to speak again of the new life that is given to friendship, to all our best relations to one another by the power of immortality. But I must not dwell on this or much besides. To speak about immortality is like speaking about life. There is nothing that it does not touch. I think that the two things above all others that have made men in all ages believe in immortality, apart, so far as we know, from any revelation save that which is written in the human heart, have been the broken lives and the broken friendships of the world. Men could not believe that this young life, broken off so suddenly, was done forever. It suggested its own continuance. And when they had been growing into sympathy with some rich and true soul for years, and were just catching sight of new immense regions in him that were still to be comprehended, it was impossible for them to stand by his coffin and think that it was all over. Instinctively friendship triumphed over the grave. Love was too strong for death! And yet, what terrible misgivings! Perhaps there is no more! Perhaps it is all over Until, to the soul standing with all its questionings before the door of the tomb, He who liveth and was dead came as He came to Martha, and holding out the key of death, said the great final conclusive words, "Thy brother shall rise again." Men's souls leaped to that word because they wanted to believe it, and had not

dared wholly to believe it till He showed them that it was true. And now if we believe in Him, we do believe it, and death is really changed to us, and the dead are really living by the assurance of the living Christ. It is a beautiful connection, one whose mysterious beauty we are always learning more and more, that the deeper our spiritual experience of Christ becomes, the more our soul's life really hangs on His life as its savior and continual friend, the more real becomes to us the unquenched life of those who have gone from us to be with Him. In those moments when Christ is most real to me, when He lives in the centre of my desires and I am resting most heavily upon His help, in those moments I am surest that the dead are not lost, that those whom this Christ in whom I trust has taken He is keeping. The more He lives to me the more they live. I want to make you feel this power of the living Christ to-day. Another year has gone from us since last Easter and taken its dead with it. Out of your families and out of this parish family of ours they have gone. Your hearts are telling them over as I speak. The little child and the tired old man. The brave and hopeful boys and girls carrying their hope and courage and aspiration into other worlds, and leaving behind them memories in which the beauty and the dearness and the pride, struggle with the sadness till we cannot separate them or tell which is the greatest. The young mother has left her children. The husband has left the wife. The wife has gone down the dark way before the husband. The bright and sunny friend whom many knew, and whom all who knew him loved for his kind heart and ready charity and cheerful temper and patient spirit and constant unselfishness and

simple faith. All these have gone from us to the world of God. As I wrote this I turned to our parish book, and looked down the list, and it was indeed a long one. The old and the young, their deaths stood written here together like the mingled graves in a graveyard. There were more old than young, and yet the young were not few. But as I read and thought of Easter Day, I could not think that they were gone. On the first Easter Day the graves were opened, and the dead came forth and went into the holy city, and were seen of many. If the city of our heart is holy with the presence of a living Christ, then the dear dead will come to us and we shall know they are not dead but living, and bless Him who has been their Redeemer, and rejoice in the work that they are doing for Him in His perfect world, and press on joyously towards our own redemption, not fearing even the grave, since by its side stands He whom we know and love, who has the keys of death and hell.

A living Christ, dear friends! the old, ever new, ever blessed Easter truth! He liveth; He was dead; He is alive for evermore. Oh that everything dead and formal might go out of our creed, out of our life, out of our heart to-day. He is alive! Do you believe it? What are you dreary for, O mourner? what are you hesitating for, O worker? what are you fearing death for, O man? Oh, if we could only lift up our heads and live with Him; live new lives, high lives, lives of hope and love and holiness, to which death should be nothing but the breaking away of the last cloud, and the letting of the life out to its completion.

May God give us some such blessing for our Easter Day.

XIII.

A TRINITY-SUNDAY SERMON.

"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."—EPH. ii. 18.

TO-DAY is Trinity-Sunday. That truth from which our church takes its name; that truth which is the centre and circumference of our faith, this one day is specially set apart for its commemoration, and we are to talk of it with one another. But nothing could be worse for us than to think that the truth of the Trinity was one that could be separated from all others and laid aside by itself, to be specially taken up and discussed upon a given day. Why, we are preaching on the Trinity always. I should count any Sunday's work unfitly done in which the Trinity was not the burden of our preaching. For when we preach the Fatherhood of God we preach His divinity; when we point to Christ the perfect Saviour, it is a Divine Redeemer that we declare; and when we plead with men to hear the voice and yield to the persuasions of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter into whose comfort we invite them is Divine. The divinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, this is our Gospel. By this Gospel we look for salvation. It is a Gospel to be used, to be believed in, and to be lived by; not merely to be kept and admired and discussed and explained. But, as a telescope which is valued for its precious uses may be sometimes taken down

and its parts examined, its beautiful construction analyzed, so the truth of the Trinity may sometimes be made the subject of a special lecture. Only we are always to remember that the truth is given to us, not to be lectured on, but to be lived by; as the telescope is precious because it can sweep the sky and separate the star-dust into recognizable worlds; and not because its parts are beautifully adjusted and its whole construction is a miracle of mechanism. There is always a tendency to value doctrines for their symmetry and interior consistency, instead of for their uses; as if we built a new steam-engine and kept it under a glass-house, instead of setting it upon the road. Its efficiency upon the road is the only true test of whether it is really worthy of the homage that we would pay it in its crystal shrine. Let us remember this always as we talk and think about the doctrine of the Trinity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the description of what we know of God. We have no right to say that it is the description of God; for what there may be in Deity of which we have no knowledge, how can we tell? We are only sure that the divine life is infinitely greater than our humanity can comprehend; and we are sure, too, that not even a revelation in the most perfect form, through the most perfect medium conceivable, could make known to the human intelligence anything in God save that which has relationship to human life. Man may reveal himself to the brutes, and the revelation may be clear and correct so far as it can go, but it must have its limit. Only that part of man can cross the line and show itself to the perception of that lower world which finds in brutedom some point which it can touch. Our strength

may reveal itself to their fear; our kindness to their power of love; some part of our wisdom, even, to their dim capacity of education; but all the while there is a vast manhood of intellect, of taste, of spirituality, of which they never know. And so I am sure that the divine nature is three persons, but one God; but how much more than that I cannot know. That deep law which runs through all life, by which the higher any nature is, the more manifold and simple at once, the more full of complexity and unity at once, it grows, is easily accepted as applicable to the highest of all natures, — God. In the manifoldness of His being these three personal existences, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, easily make themselves known to the human life. I tell the story of them, and that is my doctrine of the Trinity. But let me not say that that is all. To other worlds of other needs, and so of other understandings (for our needs are always the avenues for our intelligence), other sides of the personal force of the divine life must have issued. It is not for us to catalogue and inventory Deity; only in humble gratitude and reverence to bear our witness of the manifestation of God to us for our salvation. And so our doctrine of the Trinity is our account of what we know of God.

This idea seems to be borne out by our text. Hear it again: "Through Christ Jesus we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father." St. Paul is not describing God. He is recounting the story that he loves to tell, — the story of man's salvation. That story is always breaking from his eager lips. In his encouragements and his rebukes, in his consolations and his arguments, the history of man's salvation to God, through Jesus, by

the Spirit, is the burden of the whole. He is telling it always. That is what he lives for. He is telling it here. He does not define God. With no confident boldness does his sight try to sweep around the infinite circle of Deity and include it all; but only the God of man, the God of the human salvation, whom he knows with his whole heart, Him he announces with his ardent lips. This is the first thing we notice, — that Paul describes only the God whom man can know.

And then the next thing we notice is the completeness with which this God, this part of God, is apprehended and depicted. See what he says. He is describing man's salvation. It is one single thing, — the saving of a man. Here is the sinner in his sinfulness; there is the saint in his glory. It is the same man still, and the whole act, from the beginning to the end, — the act that took him in his sinfulness and lifted him thence, and set him in his glory, is one single act. It stands a unit among the works of God's omnipotence. It is one throb of the all-loving heart; it is one movement of the Almighty arm. And yet this simple act, salvation, is clearly distinguished into its parts. See how clearly St. Paul discriminates them. Every act is made up of a purpose, a method, and a power. And so the purpose and the method and the power are here. What is the purpose or the end? "To the Father we all have access." What is the method? "Through Christ Jesus." What is the power? "By the Spirit." Through Christ Jesus we all have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father. In this one total act, the end, the method, and the power are distinguishable. Each stands out separate and clear. And what is more, each is distinctly personal. A personal name is given to

the designation of each element. This salvation, which is all the work of God, first, last, and midmost, has its divine personalities distinct for its end and its method and its power. It is a salvation to the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit. The salvation is all one yet in it method, end, and power are recognizable. It is a three in one.

Let us look into this a little more deeply. The perfection of any act consists in the elevation and the harmony of these three elements; its end, its method, and its power. Take, for instance, the act of a boy's education. It may extend over twenty years, but it is capable of being considered as one act still from the time it begins in the nursery to the time it culminates in his profession. Now the perfection of that education will depend upon the perfection of its end, its method, and its power, and upon their being harmonious with and suitable to one another; each must be worthy of the rest. For instance, if the end be low, if no high ideal of scholarship and character is set up at the first, and kept clear all along, you may give him the best books and the best teachers, you may inspire him with the most eager enthusiasm; but you turn out only a half-taught scholar, a half-made man, as the result. The end was not worthy of the method and the power. Or, again, you set the highest standard up to be aimed at, and you put the purest ambitions into the boy's nature; but you furnish only poor means, poor schools, poor teachers, and once more the education is imperfect. The method is not worthy of the end and the power. Or, again, you make the ideal perfect, and you provide all the appliances of study at their very best; but you put

only some low or mercenary impulse into the scholar's heart, perhaps a mere servile submission to your authority, perhaps only a selfish idea of the money he is going to get out of his learning, and again a most imperfect product comes. This time the power has been unworthy of the method and the end. The ideal is the end to which, the school training is the method through which, the ambition is the power by which, the act of education is completed. Only when these three are one, only when each is perfect and so worthy of the others, only when in their perfect unity they entirely coöperate, while in their essential diversity they minister to one another, — only then, when the end is sacred, and the means are sacred, and the power is sacred, does the sacred result go forth into the world, and the boy's education is complete.

This is an illustration. Instead of a boy's education, put a man's salvation. That is the perfect education, of which all others are but types. And there we look for and we find the same harmony of end, method, and power. Make either unworthy of the others and the salvation is not complete. If it be not to the Father, the Son's redemption is in vain. If it be not through the Son, the Father waits and the Spirit moves for naught. If it be not by the Spirit, the Father's heart stands open and the method of grace is perfect, but the unmoved soul stands inactive and unsaved. The Scripture revelation comes to tell us that end, method, and power, all are perfect, and each must thus be worthy of the rest. The three are one. Each is eternal, and yet as the old creed cries, "There are not three Eternals, but One Eternal." Each is God, and yet "there are not three Gods,

but one God," — not three salvations, but one salvation, with its equal end and method and power, and so by the Trinity in Unity the soul is saved.

And now, again, let us look at this more carefully in its several parts. The end of the human salvation is "access to the Father." That is the first truth of our religion — that the source of all is meant to be the end of all, that as we all came forth from a divine Creator, so it is into divinity that we are to return and to find our final rest and satisfaction, not in ourselves, nor in one another, but in the omnipotence, the omniscience, the perfectness, and the love of God. Now we are very apt to take it for granted, that however we may differ in our definitions and our belief of the deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we are all at one, there can be and there is no hesitation, about the deity of the Father. God is divine. God is God. And no doubt we do all assent in words to such a belief; but when we think what we mean by that word God; when we remember what we mean by "Father," namely, the first source and the final satisfaction of a dependent nature; and then when we look around and see such multitudes of people living as if there were no higher source for their being than accident, and no higher satisfaction for their being than selfishness, do we not feel that there is need of a continual and most earnest preaching by word and act, from every pulpit of influence to which we can mount, of the divinity of the Father. Why, take a man who is utterly absorbed in the business of this world. How eager he is, his hands are knocking at every door; his voice is crying out for admittance into every secret place and treasure-house; he is all earnestness and restlessness. He is try-

ing to come to something, trying to get access, and to what? To the best and richest of that earthly structure from which his life seems to himself to have issued. Counting himself the child of this world, he is giving himself up with a filial devotion to his father. He is the product in his tastes and his capacities of this social and commercial machinery which seems to be the mill out of which men's characters are turned. It is the society and the business of the world that have made him what he is, and so he gives up all that he is to the society or the business that created him. The source of life and the satisfaction of life — think how many of us look for neither of them any farther back or any farther on than this routine in which we live. We devote ourselves to it; we deck it with all the graces we can bestow upon it, because there is no higher fatherhood present to our thoughts, because we know no loftier God. Now to such a man what is the first revelation that you want to make. Is it not the divinity of the Father. Remember that wonderful passage in the story of the Passover, where Jesus, with His agony before Him, is just rising to work His homely parable of washing the disciples' feet. And the description of the act is this: "Jesus knowing that He was come from God and went to God, riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself." That was the key to all His life; the spring of every action. "Knowing that he came from God and went to God," knowing, that is, that God was His Father, the source and the satisfaction of His life. And that same knowledge which Christ had, you would want your friend to have. Does it seem as if no man could escape it? Does it seem as if the Divine Father

hood were the patent fact of all creation? As if Nature uttered it in all her voices, forever telling us how we came out from the centre of all life by the beauty and the majesty and the blessing with which she bears witness of Him to our hearts? Does it seem as if those hearts themselves, like lost children, claimed their own father and would not be satisfied with any other? These voices are not fancies. They are real. But the clear fact remains that multitudes of men do go through life and only in the dimmest tones hear either nature or their own hearts claiming God. To such the truth must be uttered from some teaching of experience or doctrine. They must be told; we must tell them, by any influence that we can bring to bear upon them, that the true end of their life is divine. Let us not think that it is only the divine Son and the divine Comforter that we have to preach. With these men all about us realizing St. Paul's description, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly," surely we need to preach the divinity of the Father; the divinity of the end of life. The divinity of the Father needs assertion first of all. Let men once feel it, and then nature and their own hearts will come in with their sweet and solemn confirmations of it. But nature and the human heart do not teach it of themselves. The truest teaching of it must come from souls that are always going in and out before the divine Fatherhood themselves. By the sight of such souls others must come to seek the satisfaction that comes only from a divine end of life, — must come to crave access to the Father. So we believe and so we tempt other men to believe in God the Father.

2. This is the divinity of the end. We come from

God and we go to God. And now pass to the divinity of the method. "Through Jesus Christ." Man is separated from God. That fact, testified to by broken associations, by alienated affections, by conflicting wills, stands written in the whole history of our race. And equally clear is it to him who reads the Gospels and enters into sympathy with their wonderful Person, that in Him, in Jesus of Nazareth, appeared the Mediator by whom was to be the Atonement. His was the life and nature which, standing between the Godhood and the manhood, was to bridge the gulf and make the firm bright road, over which blessing and prayer might pass and repass with confident golden feet forever. And then the question is, — and when we ask it thus it becomes so much more than a dry problem of theology; it is a question for live anxious men to ask with faces full of eagerness, — out of which nature came that Mediator? Out of which side of the chasm sprang the bridge leaping forth towards the other? Evidently on both sides that bridge is bedded deep and clings with a tenacity which shows how it belongs there. He is both human and divine. But from which side did the bridge spring? Who moved toward the reconciliation? Was it some towering man who, growing beyond his brothers, overlooked the battlements of heaven, and saw the place in the divine heart where man belonged, and then came back and bade his brethren follow him, and led them on with him into the home of a father who, reluctant or forgetful, sat without effort till his children found their way to him? It is the most precious part of our belief that it was with God that the activity began. It is the very soul of the Gospel, as I read it, that the Father's heart, sitting above

us in His holiness, yearned for us as we lay down here in our sin. And when there was no man to make an intercession, He sent His Son to tell us of His love, to live with us, to die for us, to lay His life like a strong bridge out from the divine side of existence, over which we might walk, fearfully but safely, back into the divinity where we belonged. Through Him we have access to the Father. As the end was divine so the method is divine. As it is to God that we come, so it is God who brings us there. I can think nothing else without dishonoring the tireless, quenchless, love of God.

Analogies, I know, are very imperfect and often very deceptive, when they try to illustrate the highest things. But is it not as if a great strong nation, too strong to be jealous, strong enough to magnanimously pity and forgive, had to deal with a colony of rebels whom it really desired to win back again to itself? They are of its own stock, but they have lost their allegiance and are suffering the sorrows and privations of being cut off from their fatherland and living in rebellion. That fatherland might send its embassy to tempt them home; and, if it did, whom would it choose to send? Would it not take of itself its messenger? The embassy that is sent is of the country that sends it. That is its value, that is its influence. The fatherland would choose its choicest son, taking him from nearest to its heart, and say, Go and show them what I am, how loving and how ready to forgive, for you are I and you can show them. Such was the mission of the Messiah. Do you not remember His own parable? One day He told His hearers in the old temple how the master of the vineyard sent out his servants one after another to his rebellious husbandmen, but

last of all he sent unto them his son. What was the difference? It was Himself that He sent then. The ambassador was of the very land that sent Him, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." How full the words of the old creed are of rich meaning. How the heat of the hot controversy in which they were born has passed out of them, and they are deep and clear and cool as wells that draw their water of refreshment from the unheated centre of the eternal rock. My friend says God sends Christ into the world and therefore Christ is not God. I cannot see it so. It seems to me just otherwise. God sends Christ just because Christ is God. He sends Himself. His sending is a coming. The ambassador, the army is of the very most precious substance of the country that dispatches it. This is the meaning of that constant title of our Master. He is the Son of God. Think of it. Does not "Son" mean just this which the church's faith, with the best words that it could find, has labored to express, "Two persons and one substance." That is the Father and the Child. Separate personality but one nature. Unity and distinctness both, but the unity as true a fact as the distinctness. Nay, the unity the fact which made the essence of His mission, the fact which made Him the true, fit, only perfect messenger of God and Saviour of the world.

This is the glory of the Incarnation. That embassy out of the fatherland comes to the rebel colony and lives there. It enters into the rude huts which the degenerate colonists have built, and makes itself a home in them. It is a stranger there, and yet the men of whom it is composed find in these half-savage huts memories of the com-

mon home from which these colonists as well as they came forth at first. They are not wholly strangers. Something about the shape of the huts reminds them of the palaces at home, and here and there an iron instrument with blunted edge, or a household utensil put to some unseemly use, makes them remember that these rebels they have come to reconcile are originally brethren of theirs. And so the Mediator came to us, and every day of all the life in Palestine bore witness both to the strangeness and to the familiarness with which He lived among us. The events and habits of the Saviour's career on earth seem like the huts of savagedom inhabited by the children of civilization. And so it is with the presence of Christ always, His unseen presence in the institutions of the world and in the hearts of men. He is always glorifying them and shaming them at once, showing at once their natural capacity and their degenerate condition. It does seem to me that the great beauty of the old belief in the divinity of Christ is the faith in the capacity of manhood which it implies. It believes that man is of so godlike a nature that he can hold God, that God can be incarnated in him. Our sense of man's capacity is low. We do not think that God could dwell in the temple of a life like ours. But was not that just what He came to teach us that He could do? He teaches it to us by the rich experience of His Spirit dwelling in our spirits, but before that He taught it to us by the Word made flesh. A brute race could have seen no incarnation. God could care for them and feed them, but He could not come into them, live in them. But man is better. "Because we are sons, God has sent the spirit of His Son into our hearts." Because we are sons, His Son Himself could

take our nature upon Him. The more truly we believe in the Incarnate Deity, the more devoutly we must believe in the essential glory of humanity, the more earnestly we must struggle to keep the purity and integrity and largeness of our own human life, and to help our brethren to keep theirs. It is because the divine can dwell in us that we may have access to divinity. We and they must, through the divine method, come to the divine end where we belong, through God the Son to God the Father.

3. And now turn to the point that still remains. We have spoken of the end and of the method; but no true act is perfect unless the power by which it works is worthy of the method through which and the end to which it proceeds. The power of the act of man's salvation is the Holy Spirit. "Through Christ Jesus we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father." What do we mean by the Holy Spirit being the power of salvation? I think we are often deluded and misled by carrying out too far some of the figurative forms in which the Bible and the religious experience of men express the saving of the soul. For instance, salvation is described as the lifting of the soul out of a pit and putting it upon a pinnacle, or on a safe high platform of grace. The figure is strong and clear. Nothing can overstate the utter dependence of the soul on God for its deliverance; but if we let the figure leave in our minds an impression of the human soul as a dead, passive thing, to be lifted from one place to the other like a torpid log that makes no effort of its own either for coöperation or resistance, then the figure has misled us. The soul is a live thing. Everything that is done with it must be done in and through its own

essential life. If a soul is saved, it must be by the salvation, the sanctification of its essential life; if a soul is lost, it must be by perdition of its life, by the degradation of its affections and desires and hopes. Let there be nothing merely mechanical in the conception of the way God treats these souls of ours. He works upon them in the vitality of thought, passion, and will that He put into them. And so when a soul comes to the Father through the Saviour, its whole essential vitality moves in the act. With those affections with which it has loved the world, it loves its Lord. With that same will with which it chose iniquity, it chooses now holiness and heaven. The whole capacity of life was there. Now the power of Life has entered in and is using it. And just this sometimes hides from us the essentially divine character of the new spiritual life. It seems as if the Christian had simply chosen to love God instead of loving his business; but as he goes on and finds what this new love of God really means, he finds what it is that has happened. He understands what is the nature of the change, though its infiniteness enlarges to Him every day. The capacities of faith and love and holiness have been taken possession of and filled out to their completeness by the very Spirit of holiness and love and faith which they were made to hold, but which is greater than themselves. The divine power has taken possession of the soul's capacities, and, although it may seem at first as if the soul itself had originated this new movement to God through Christ, just as it may seem to the child at first as if his body did all these spiritual acts which the spirit does within it, yet, by and by, the conviction clears itself, and grows clearer and clearer constantly, that it is not the soul a

simple ability to be religious that has made it religious but that God by direct visitation has occupied that ability and is drawing the soul to Himself; just as the child comes to distinguish between the body's mere ability to answer the mind's requirements, and the mind itself which uses the body as the servant of its needs.

When this experience is reached, then see what Godhood the soul has come to recognize in the world. First, there is the Creative Deity from which it sprang, and to which it is struggling to return — the divine End, God the Father. Then there is the Incarnate Deity, which makes that return possible by the exhibition of God's love, — the divine method, God the Son; and then there is this Infused Deity, this divine energy in the soul itself, taking its capacities and setting them homeward to the Father — the divine Power of Salvation, God the Holy Spirit. To the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. If we recur a moment to the figure which we used a while ago; God is the divine Fatherland of the human soul; Christ is like the embassy, part and parcel of that Fatherland, which comes out to win it back from its rebellion; and the Holy Spirit is the Fatherland wakened in the rebellious colony's own soul. He is the newly-living loyalty. When the colony comes back, the power that brings it is the Fatherland in it seeking its own. So when the soul comes back to God, it is God in the soul that brings it. So we believe in the divine power, one with the divine method and the divine end, in God the Spirit one with the Father and the Son.

This appears to me the truth of the Deity as it relates to us. I say again, "as it relates to us." What it may be in itself; how Father, Son, and Spirit meet in the

perfect Godhood; what infinite truth more there may, there must, be in that Godhood, no man can dare to guess. But, to us, God is the end, the method, and the power of salvation; so He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is in the perfect harmony of these sacred personalities that the precious unity of the Deity consists. I look at the theologies, and so often it seems as if the harmony of Father, Son, and Spirit had been lost, both by those that own and by those that disown the Trinity. One theology makes the Father hard and cruel, longing, as it were, for man's punishment, extorting from the Son the last drop of life-blood which man's sin had incurred as penalty. Another theology makes the Son merely one of the multitude of sinning men, with somewhat bolder aspirations laying hold on a forgiveness which God might give but which no mortal might assume. Still another theology can find no God in the human heart at all; merely a fermentation of human nature is this desire after goodness, this reaching out towards Divinity. The end is not worthy of the method. I do not want to come to such a Father as some of the theologians have painted. Or the method is not worthy of the end. No man could come to the perfect God through such a Jesus as some men have described. Or the power is too weak for both; and all that Christ has done lies useless, and all the Father's welcome waits in vain for the soul that has in it no Holy Ghost. But let each be real, and each be worthy of the others, and the salvation is complete. But each cannot be worthy of the others unless each is perfect. But each cannot be perfect, unless each is Divine; that is our faith in the Trinity, — three Persons and one God.

We talk here to-day about the doctrine of the Trinity, our best conception and account of God. But does it not sometimes come over our minds, What shall we think of all this when we come into that world where we shall see God with unclouded vision, standing close to His mercy-seat and to His throne? Shall we still hold our doctrine of the Trinity? Will these formulas in which we have glibly argued to one another about God, as we talked in our churches and our parlors here, will they suffice to express that majesty and love which then shall pour in on the open soul conclusive witness of itself? Surely we must not hope it. Surely our formulas will burst, and prove too small and thin for that stupendous self-revelation of the Deity. We shall see, I believe, that our statements here were to the knowledge that will flood our eager apprehension there only what the child's crude knowledge of his father is to the full-grown son's comprehension of the generous and thoughtful nature under whose shadow and in whose light he lives. But just as the son, much as he learns about his father, never outgrows, however he may refine and enlarge, his first conception of the essential qualities of the parental life, its truth and love and justice, so to the soul in heaven, learning more and more forever of the God of its salvation, this shall become clearer and clearer always: that it was saved by a divine power, through a divine method, to a divine end; into the heart of the Father, through the brotherhood of the Son, urged by the inspiring Spirit. That will be the everlasting salvation, real to the soul forever, whatever else may change. That will be the reality by which we shall know that the glory we have reached is the same for which we longed and prayed

and struggled when we were on the earth, in these dear old days to which we shall look back with undying affection from eternity.

Let us keep the faith of the Trinity. I have spoken all in vain to-day, unless you know now that I do not mean by such an exhortation, "Let us cling to an idea, and die for the holding to a precious word." Let us do that, if need be; but far above that, let us seek to come to the highest, through the highest, by the highest. Let the end and the method and the power of our life be all divine. If our hearts are set on that, Jesus will accept us for His disciples; all that He promised to do for those who trusted Him, He will do for us. He will show us the Father; He will send us the Comforter; nay, what can He do, or what can we ask that will outgo the strong and sweet assurance of the promise which we have been studying to-day: Through Him we shall have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

XIV.

IS IT I?

"And as they did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?"— MATT. xxvi. 21, 22.

IT was a moment of dismay among the disciples of Jesus. Their Master, sitting with them at the supper, had just declared that one of them should commit an act of the basest treachery and betray Him to His enemies. There could be no deed more contemptible. Every obligation of duty and affection was violated by it. One who stood by, in the rude upper chamber where they ate the supper, might well have watched with curiosity to see how these plain men would take the words of Jesus. Will they break out in indignant remonstrance? Will they fall to accusing one another? Will each draw back from his brother apostle in horror at the thought that possibly that brother apostle is the man who is to do this dreadful thing? Instead of these, there is a different result from either, and one that certainly surprises us. Each man's anxiety seems to be turned, not towards his brother, but towards himself, and you hear them asking, one after another, "Lord, is it I?" "Lord, is it I?" Peter, Bartholomew, John, James, Thomas, each speaks for himself, and the quick questions come pouring in out of their simple hearts, "Lord, is it I?" "Lord, is it I?"

Certainly there is something that is strange in this These men were genuine. There could not be any affectation in their question. A real live fear came over them at Jesus's prophecy. And it was a good sign, no doubt, that the first thought of each of them was about the possibility of his own sin. When a man foresees a great temptation that is coming, it is always better that, instead of turning to his neighbors and saying, as he searches their faces, "I wonder who will do this wicked thing," he should turn to himself and say, "Is it possible that I am the man who will do it?" When the wind is rising it is good for each ship at sea to look to its own ropes and sails, and not stand gazing to see how ready the other ships are to meet it. We all feel that we would rather hear a man asking about himself anxiously than to see him so sure of himself that the question never occurred to him. We should be surer of his standing firm if we saw that he knew he was in danger of a fall. Now, all this is illustrated in Christ's disciples. It must have been that their life with Him had deepened the sense of the mystery of their lives. They had seen themselves, in their intercourse with Him, as capable of much more profound and various spiritual experience than they had thought possible before. And this possible life, this possible experience, had run in both directions, up and down. They had recognized a before unknown capacity for holiness, and they had seen also a before unknown power of wickedness. Their sluggishness had been broken up, and they had seen that they were capable of divine things. Their self-satisfied pride had been broken up, and they had seen that they were capable of brutal things. Heaven and hell had

opened above their heads and under their feet. They had not thought it incredible when Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you to myself," and now they did not think it incredible when He said, "One of you shall betray me." The life with Christ had melted the ice in which they had been frozen, and they felt it in them either to rise to the sky or to sink into the depths. That was and that always is Christ's revelation of the possibilities of life. To one who really lives with Him the heights above and the depths below both grow more profound. A new goodness and a new badness become possible. He makes men know that they are the children of God, and that as God's children they have a chance to be far better or far worse than they could be when they thought themselves only His slaves. All this Christ did for those first disciples and the same change of life, the same deepening of its possibilities, has come to all who have really lived with Him since then.

There are times in the lives of all of us, I think, when that comes to us which came here to Christ's disciples. Of such times and their position in our lives and their effect upon our lives let us speak this morning. Beneath us as beneath them the worse possibilities of our nature sometimes reveal themselves. There are times when it seems to us not impossible that we should commit very great sins. Just as there are some times when we catch sight of the possibility of holiness which lies above us, and comprehend with rapturous hope how good it is in our power to become; so there are these other times when the mysteriousness of our nature opens its other side, and the crimes and vices, at which we and

all men tremble, seem to be not wholly impossible to us. Such times are not our worst times certainly. Often they are times which, by their very sense of danger, are the safest and strongest of our lives. But they are often moments that dismay us. They come in upon our self-complacency and shock it with their ominous presence, these moments when we suspect ourselves and see that inevitably to the power of being very good if we will, is linked the other power of being very bad if we will, too. Let us consider what some of the times are which waken this darker self-consciousness, this sense of our own possibilities of sin.

One of them is the time when we see deep and flagrant sin in some other man. When some great crime is done, when through the community there runs the story of some frightful cruelty, or dreadful fraud, I think that almost all of us are conscious of a strange mixture of two emotions, one of horror and the other of a terrible familiarity. The act is repugnant to all our conscientiousness, but the powers that did the act, and the motives that persuaded the doing of it, are powers which we possess and motives which we have felt. They are human powers and human motives. It is a human act. If we could watch the sinning of another race with a wholly different nature, I think that it would stir no such self-consciousness. If we could stand by and see the wickedness of fiends or fallen angels, it might excite our hatred, our disgust, but it would make no such deep questionings as come when we recognize our own humanity in the sinning man, and find our nature bearing witness that it has in it the same powers by which he has been so wicked. A being of a higher race might see our sin

and sorrow with pity, with pain, with wonder; but the pain would be all free from self-reproach, and the wonder would all exhaust itself outside of him. It would be the innocent bewilderment with which I remember, in a picture by Domenichino at Bologna, an angel stands at the foot of the empty cross, and tries with his finger one of the sharp points in the crown of thorns which the Saviour had worn during His passion. It is all a sad inexplicable wonder to him. It appeals to no experience of wickedness and woe in his pure and angelic nature. But when you or I take the crown of thorns into our hands we know in our own hearts the meanness, the jealousy, the hatred which it represents. The possible Jew, the possible enemy of righteousness and crucifier of the Saviour, stirs to self-consciousness in us. When you read the story of yesterday's defaulter fleeing to-day, an exile and an outcast, or sitting gloomily behind his prison bars, it is not with an angel's innocent wonder what a sin like his can mean; it is with the understanding of a man who has felt the same temptation to which this poor wretch has yielded, that you deplore his fate. It is always the difference between an angel's pity and a man's pity. With simple wonder an angel might walk through our State Prison halls; but a man must walk there full of humbleness and charity; for, as the best man that ever lived finds something of common humanity in us which makes his goodness seem not impossible to us, so the worst of men stirs by the sight of his human sin some sense of what human power of sinfulness we too possess.

2. Another of the occasions which lets us see our own possibility of sin, which opens to us a glimpse of how

wicked we might be, is when we do some small sin and recognize the deep power of sinfulness by which we do it. The Bible is full of this idea. Look at Adam with the forbidden apple. Is it only that one sin which terrifies him, and makes him dread the coming of God which had been once the joy of the garden day? Is it not that pressing up behind that sin he sees the long procession of sins which he and his descendants will commit? A boy paints his first stumbling, ill-drawn picture, and, as he gazes at it, he sees, already, the glowing canvas which he is some day to cover. It grows possible to him. A boy makes his first boyish bargain, and the trade-impulse rises in him, and, already, he sees himself a merchant. It is the same thing. A pure, honest boy cheats with his first little timid fraud, and on the other side, the bad side of him, the door flies open and he sees the possibility that he, too, should be the swindler whose enormous frauds make the whole city tremble. The slightest crumbling of the earth under your feet makes you aware of the precipice. The least impurity makes you ready to cry out, as some image of hideous lust rises before you, "Oh, is it I? Can I come to that?"

3. And yet another occasion when we become aware of our own bad possibility is the expression of any suspicion about us by another person. Perfectly unwarrantable and false we may know the charge to be which is brought against us, but the mere fastening of the sin and our name together, the fact that any man could mention the two in the same breath, must turn our eyes in upon ourselves and set us to asking, "Is it impossible?" "I did not do this thing indeed. My conscience is all clear. I did not commit this cruelty. I did not prove

so ungrateful and treacherous as this charge would make me. Perhaps I could not, perhaps I know I could not do this special villainy. But can I blaze up into fiery indignation at men's daring to suspect me without remembering what badness I am capable of. Can I resent suspicion as an angel might, who, standing in the light of God, dreaded and felt no sin?" I think that for you or me to find our names linked to-morrow in this community with some great crime, of which we knew that we were totally innocent, must stir the mystery of our inner life, and make us see what capacity of sin is lying there. I think our disavowal of the sin that we were charged with would be not boisterously angry, but quiet and solemn and humble, with a sense of danger and a gratitude for preservation. I think that ought to be the influence. And even the boisterousness with which some men deny a charge against their characters is still a sign in a worse way of how their conscience has been touched. Would you want the clerk in your store to be charged with dishonesty, and not go back to his work, when the charge had been disproved, with a deepened perception of temptation, and a quickened watchfulness and care?

4. Or yet again. By a strange but very natural process, the same result often comes from just the opposite cause. Not merely when men suspect us and charge us with wrong doing, but when men praise us and say that we are good, this same recognition of how bad we have the power to be often arises. Suppose that you are going on in a dull and lifeless way, not conscious of anything about yourself except just the practical powers by which you do your work from day to day. You have forgotten the mystery of your spiritual life. You have grown

wholly unaware of the moral extremes whose folded capacities are in you. You never think how wicked you may be, or how good you may be. "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." You have come to that. And then suppose that some fellow-being, under the influence of some delusion, begins to praise you. He takes some little thing which you have done; he conceives for it lofty motives which you never dreamed of; he purifies it of all selfishness; he holds it up and says, "See what a true deep spiritual man it must have been that did this thing." What is in your heart as you see your poor little deed held up above the world, shining with the light that this friend's imagination has thrown into it, and with the eyes of all men fastened upon it? Is there no shame? You must be a very poor sort of man if there is not. Is there no breaking up of the dead equilibrium of self-content? Is it not as if the net in which a bird had been held, with its wings helpless and useless, were torn to pieces, and the bird had either to fall to the ground or to fly to the sky. Its danger and its chance were revealed to it together. A man comes up to our life and looking round upon the crowd of our fellow-men, he says, "See, I will strike the life of this brother of ours and you shall hear how true it rings." He does strike it, and it does seem to them to ring true, and they shout their applause; but we whose life is struck feel running all through us at the stroke the sense of hollowness. Our soul sinks as we hear the praises. They start desire but they reveal weakness. No true man is ever so humble and so afraid of himself as when other men are praising him most loudly.

5. I must name one time more. Is it not true that

every temptation which comes to us, however bravely and successfully it may be resisted, opens to us the sight of some of our human capacity of sin. To resist temptation is never, I think, an exhilarating experience. W remember too vividly how near we came to yielding. We come out of battle thankful that we are safe and sound, but the night after the battle is not a light-hearted or jovial time. There are too many vacant places in the tent which only yesterday were full. The shriek of the bullet and the sight of the bursting shell are still too fresh and vivid. We are too much surprised to find that we are safe. Our escape has been too narrow. Job, as his wealth rolls back to him, takes it with thankful hands, but he cannot laugh over it when he remembers how from the heights of his misery he looked over into the possibility of cursing God. Simeon, when the child Christ is brought to him, thanks God that he has lived to see the fulfilment of his hopes; but he may well have remembered how often he had been almost ready to despair and give up his long watch. Nay, even Jesus Himself, what shall we think was the kind of step with which He came down the mountain? He had seen Satan. He had seen with what greedy and confident eyes Satan looked at that humanity of his, as if it were something that belonged to Him. Nay, in His own humanity He had felt a treacherous something, that was ready to respond to Satan and to own his mastery. Strong and victorious He came away. But was there no new solemn insight into this humanity which He had taken? Was not the Incarnation more than ever awful to the Incarnate One? He, the sinless, had gone up and looked over the edge into the deepest depths of sin. He needed the

ministry of angels, and He surely came down the mountain serious and sad. And so it is with you, when you follow your Lord into that experience. It may be that you come out by His grace pure and thankful, but you come out like Him, serious and sad, for you have looked down as He looked into the possibility of sin. The man who dares to laugh at a temptation which he has felt and resisted is not yet wholly safe out of its power.

I name these times then in which the possibility of our own great wickedness appears to us. No doubt the list might be made longer, but these are enough. When other men sin flagrantly; when we sin in any degree; when men suspect us although we are innocent; when men praise us; when we are tempted and resist, — at all those times the ground opens under our feet, and, though we stand safe and firm, we see whither we might have fallen. What is this but saying that in every serious moment of life the possibility of sin stands up before us? None but the man who has no serious moments, none but he who makes all life a play, escapes the sight. To every other man, nay, may we not say to every man, since no man is literally always a trifler, to every man at some time the clouds roll back, the spell is broken, and he sees what a power of being wicked as of being good belongs to him just as man. And now is it good for him to see this? Will it help him or harm him? Perhaps it is a question that is needless. He cannot help himself. He must see it. When it has once opened on him, he cannot shut his eyes and forget it if he would. He will see it still behind his folded lids. But still we may ask the question Will it help or harm him? And that will depend upon the way it works in him. It may become in him either paralysis

or inspiration. One man sees his danger and stands powerless. Another man sees his danger and every faculty is strung to its intensest strength. It is like the way in which the knowledge of the shortness of life may affect a man. One man it fills with dismay; another man it turns into a hero. What you want in both cases is to realize the conviction as a motive, and not as a mere emotion. I remember reading of how some one once asked a veteran surgeon what was the effect of the constant sight of human pain which filled his life, — how he could bear it. And his answer was wise and philosophical. He said that, as near as he could state it, the sight of pain ceased with the surgeon to act as a source of emotion, but continued to be effective as a motive for action. The misery at seeing it passed away, but the desire to relieve it grew stronger and stronger. So I think it is with the best sense of our danger of sin. Not as an emotion, not as something that we sit down and weep over, but as a motive, as something that makes us watch and work and pray, does it do its best work for us. The knees need not tremble, nor the heart grow sick. If the feet are set more resolutely toward goodness, and the hands lay hold more firmly upon help, it is good for us to know how wicked we may be, how great our danger is.

And what is ' that makes that difference? How is the consciousness of our danger prevented from becoming a depressing emotion and turned into an inspiring motive? It must be by opening the life upon the other side. It must be by realizing the possibilities of our human life for good as well as for evil, by seeing and never forgetting how good we have a chance to be, as well as how bad we may become. This is the power of hope; and hope

is the ~~true master of~~ fear. Hope uses fear. It demands its service by a natural right. It is fear's essential superior. Under hope fear works well. But in a life that has no hope fear is a surly tyrant. Now our human nature cannot bear being shut up in its present condition No man's nature can. Your nature feels its own mysterious capacities too much to believe for a moment that it can be nothing different from what it is. It crowds and presses for an outlet. If it can find an outlet only on the lower side, toward its possibility of sinfulness, it will go forth there and contemplate the evil that lies within its power until it grows into stony hopelessness. But if it finds an opening on the upper side of its present condition, it prefers that, and going out there, aspiring instead of despairing, it is simply driven on toward that which it is already seeking, by the knowledge of what lies behind it if by any chance it should fall back. This is always the relation between hope and fear in healthy life. A merchant hopes to be rich, and the fear of being poor, instead of being a vexing anxiety, becomes the humble servant of his expectation, and helps him on toward wealth. The fear of death is terrible to a sick man until the hope of life and strength and activity opens before him; and then in his convalescence the fear of death has ceased to depress him as a feeling, and only remains with him as a motive to caution and watchfulness. Thus fear is always good when it has hope to rule it. And now if you saw a young man overwhelmed with the sight on which our eyes have been fixed to-day; if you saw him so full of the consciousness of the power of sin in his life, the possibility of the badness that he might do and be, that he was wretched and paralyzed

what would you do for him. Would you try to make him forget what he had seen? Would you try to shut out the mystery of his life from him, and make him live again the life of narrow satisfaction in the present which he lived before he looked down into the deep gulf? You could not do it; but if you could would it be well? Surely not. What you need to do for him is to make him lift up his eyes and see the heights above him. You want to make him like the climber on a ladder, who looks up and not down, who climbs not to escape the gulf below him, but to reach the top above him, and who feels the gulf below him only as a power that makes the hold of foot and hand on every round of the ladder which they strike more firm. Now it is the glory of the Christian Gospel that in the treatment of man's spiritual nature it preserves this true relation between hope and fear perfectly. Christ is the very embodiment of what I have just now been saying. Read your New Testament. As the man who feels its influence leaves his sin and strives towards holiness, what is the power of his progress? Is it the fear of what he leaves behind? Is it not always primarily the desire for the holiness he seeks? And yet the saved of the Saviour as He is borne onward into His salvation never can lose the sense of the great deep below him, into which he must fall if he lets the Saviour go. But that sense only tightens more closely the grasp of the hands which have first seized the hope that was set before them out of ardent desire. This, I am sure, is always the proportion of the Gospel. "Flee from the wrath to come" is always an ally and humble servant of the great "Come unto me." "Come unto me" might stand alone, even if there were no "Flee from the wrath

to come.' But what would "Flee from the wrath to come" be without "Come unto me"? One is almost ready to say: Better lose sight of the mysterious capacity of life altogether, than to see only one side of it. Hide your eyes. Forget that you are a sinner; never dare look down and see what a sinner you may be, if there is no Saviour from your sin. But if there is, and if you see Him, then feel the depth below you and let it make you cling to Him more closely; realize the power of sinfulness, which has in it the cruelty and falseness and impurity of the worst men that have lived, that you may realize also the power of holiness which has in it the truth and bravery and gentleness of all the saints; let the gulf under your feet measure for you the sky overhead. Know what a sinner you might have been only that you may know more deeply and gratefully the salvation which has saved you.

I suggested just now the analogy between our physical and moral consciousness, between our consciousness of the power to be sick and the consciousness of the power to sin. It is an analogy which illustrates what I have just been saying. There is a nervousness about health which is all morbid. It is full of imaginations. There are people who can never hear a disease described without thinking that they have it. They never hear a sick man talk without feeling all his symptoms repeated in themselves. You think of such a person and realize his wretchedness. Then you look away from him to a perfectly healthy man who seldom thinks about being sick at all. But yet he is something different from what he would be if there were no power of sickness in him. Unconscious for the most part, but now and then coming forth into con-

sciousness, there is always present with him a sense of his humanity with all the liabilities which that involves. He does not do what a man would do who had literally a frame of iron. And that is just the condition of the man with the healthy soul. He does not nervously believe, when he hears of any flagrant crime, that he is just upon the brink of that crime himself. He lives in doing righteousness, but all the time he keeps the consciousness that sin, even out to its worst possibilities, sin even to the cruelty of Cain, the lust of David, the treachery of Judas, is open to him. This consciousness surrounds all his duty. His righteousness is not an angel's righteousness. It is always a man's righteousness, always pervaded, solemnized, strengthened, ay, sweetened to him by the knowledge that there is a bad corresponding to every good, and that he might do one instead of the other just because he is a man.

I do not care to go one step into the theological mysteries of compelling grace and final perseverance. I do not care to ask whether it is possible for man, still being man, to come to such a point that this of which I have spoken to-day, this possibility of flagrant and terrible sin, should utterly and absolutely be left behind and pass away. I think that what I have been saying lately shows us that a man, as the power of the hope of holiness takes stronger and stronger hold upon him, does pass more and more out of the fear of sin. And since his hope of holiness always comes to him as the gift of God, and depends on his dependence on God, we can see that as man by experience grows sure of God, and morally certain that he never can be separated from Him, he passes to a profound belief that he will not fall into the flagrant sin, which

yet, because he is a man, remains possible for him. This moral certainty of his comes from his confidence in God. It is not confidence in himself. Here it seems to me is the true escape from whatever has seemed harsh or hopeless in the truth which I have preached to you to-day. The disciples heard Jesus tell of the coming treason, and each of them thought with horror that he might be the traitor. "Lord, is it I?" and "Is it I?" they cried. They knew that they loved their Lord, but they dared not be sure that they would not desert Him. Sufficient spiritual light had come to them to make them see the mystery of their own hearts. Once, before they had this spiritual light, they would have cast aside such a suspicion as an insult. "Am I not an honorable man?' "Is not such a mean act impossible for me?" Now Christ in showing them their higher chance has shown them their lower chance, their danger too, and each wonders whether it can be he who is to do this dreadful thing. Now open a later page of the apostolic history and hear St. Paul writing to his Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." See what a change. Here is confidence! Here is a moral certainty! Whoever else may turn traitor, Paul is sure that it will not be he. But it is confidence — not in himself nor in his manliness or honor — only in Christ and in the power of His grace and love. "More than conqueror," but "more than conqueror through Him who loved us." Is there not here the beautiful progress of a moral nature as regards the whole matter of confidence? At the first a

pure blank self-reliance, the solid and unbroken self-content of a man who thinks himself able to meet and conquer all temptations. Then an insight into the mysterious capacity of sinning, which breaks and scatters the confidence in self, and leaves the poor soul full of fears and doubts. Then an entrance into Christ and His love and power, where the soul, given to Him, finds a new confidence in His strength, and is sure with a sureness which has no warrant but its trust in Him. Have you ever watched one of the waterfalls that come over the perpendicular side of a steep mountain? Do you remember how it changes from the top to the bottom of its fall. At first where it comes over the brink it is one solid mass of dark-green water, compact and all sure of itself. Then half-way down the perpendicular face over which it descends, see what a change has come. Its solidness has gone. It is all mist and vapor. You can hardly find it. Only like a thin haze it hangs in front of the dark rock behind it. But once more, as it gets farther down, see how it gathers again. The mist collects, and is once more a stream; a new solidity appears; and at the mountain's foot the brook, restored out of its distraction, starts singing on its way down the bright valley, white still with the memory of the confusion into which it has been thrown. So is it with the confidence of man. It begins full of self-trust. It scatters and seems lost as his experience deepens and he learns his own possibility of sin. It is gathered anew and goes out in happiness and helpfulness when he finds Christ and gives his poor bewildered and endangered soul into His love for keeping.

This is the Bible picture of human life. Where shall

we look for any other that is as reasonable or as complete? The fearless truster of himself; the distressed doubter of himself; the faithful truster of Christ! They are all here. We lay the Bible picture down beside our human life and it explains everything. In life, too, there is the stout believer in himself, the frightened disbeliever in himself, and the sure believer in God. As a man comes into Christ, that experience deepens itself around him till he has fulfilled it all. First, a stripping away of his own righteousness, and then a clothing with the righteousness which is in Jesus. First, a light thrown upon himself, till it seems as if there were no wickedness he might not do, and then a drawing of his self into Christ's self till he sees there is no holiness which he may not attain. First, the weakness which comes of self-knowledge, and then the strength which is "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." First, the fear which cries, "Is it I?" as it hears the announcement of some dreadful sin; and then the wondering faith which cries, "Is it I?" as the doors are opened and they who are Christ's are called to enter in to His everlasting life.

XV.

THE FOOD OF MAN.

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."—MATT. iv. 4.

CHRIST, at the very opening of His work, met the evil spirit in the desert and contended with him. The words which I have just quoted are the answer of the Saviour to one of the attacks of Satan. The tempter said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." And Jesus answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Such an answer must have peculiar force and meaning, as it comes from the lips of Christ. He tells Satan that obedience to God is better than bread; that if either is to be given up there cannot be a doubt, there can hardly be a difficulty, about the decision. With one of these two things which He compares together, He had been eternally familiar. The word, the will of God, He had known forever. He had obeyed God in the complete unity of nature which He had with God. We can remember how touchingly His mind ran back a few years later, when He was just upon the brink of His great agony, to this eternal intercourse with God: "Now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." All that He knew, the richness, the

feeding and strengthening power of the word of God. And now He had been made man, and was here upon the earth. With his human flesh He had assumed human necessities which He had never known by His own experience before. That hunger, which has so ruled men always, which has made them violate duty, commit great crimes, sacrifice their strongest natural affections; that need of bread, which, working steadily, has developed man into all the progress of civilization, and, working violently and spasmodically, has turned man into a brute; that need of bread, which always lies primary among the forces that control men's lives, had taken hold of this new human life of Jesus. It was a real temptation. He was genuinely an hungered. This compulsion of the lower nature has, for the first time perhaps in Him, met the compulsion of the higher nature under which He has wholly lived. Now will He yield? His whole work, our whole hope, hangs upon His decision. There was, there must have been, a real chance of His yielding. But as we look at Him, we see that He will not yield. The old eternal joy of serving God outweighs the new temptation of the senses. It grows clear before Him that the higher life of the spirit is more precious than, is worth any sacrifice of, the lower life of the flesh. He says, "I choose." The victory is won. "Let me be hungry, but let me not disobey God."

But we see also, in this reply of Jesus, how thoroughly He had entered into and identified Himself with the humanity which He had assumed. He takes His temptation as a man. He gives His answer as a man. It is not the speech of one bringing a superior nature, clothed in superior strength, and so capable of an exceptional re-

sistance where ordinary manhood must give way. It is not, "I, as God, must have divine sustenance, and so can do without your human food." It is, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Simply as men, we all, the poorest and the greatest of us all together, need the life of obedience, and any sacrifice of the flesh is cheap that wins it for us. Here was the second value of the temptation of Christ. It was not only the divine Mediator preparing Himself for His task, and proving the temper of the arms with which He was to fight the battle; it was the highest, the perfect man, becoming conscious of himself, and declaring, in behalf of all humanity, the universal human necessities. "I, as man," he says, "need more than bread. I must not be satisfied, I am not satisfied with mere food for the body: I must have truth." Humanity was tested there. Can it in this supreme specimen of it be satisfied with bread? If it can, then all these dreams, these cravings, these discontents, these importunate demands of men for spiritual things, for truth, for duty, for God, are mere chimeras. If it cannot, if this man, the best of men, says that food is not enough for man, then no man ought to be satisfied so long as he has only the mere nourishment that feeds the body. "Man shall not live by bread alone." No doubt it all seemed perfectly clear to Jesus. It was almost a truism to Him. Humanity lay perfectly open to His consciousness. Reading Himself, He read man as man never had been read by man before. He said, That is not life which bread alone can feed. Life for man means a spiritual condition which only spiritual forces can supply. Therefore of course, man shall not live by bread alone. It is like saying that a tree cannot live merely upon water. It

needs other elements which the rich earth must give. That is its nature.

And one thing more about this assertion by Christ of the higher necessities of man. He does not simply discern them in His own human consciousness. It is noticeable that He also corroborates them out of the past experience of men He not merely sees in Himself that man cannot live at his fullest except in obedience to God; He also discovers in the past that men have found this out and recognized it. For, notice, His reply is a quotation: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone." He quotes from the speech which Moses had made to the people of Israel after they had crossed the desert, and when they were just about to enter the promised land. He says, Moses found out there in his desert what I have found here in my wilderness. He wrote it down, and here I find it true. So He appeals to experience. He strengthens his own present consciousness by the assurance that other men have known the same; that it has always been true. As He had said before, It is not something which belongs to me in my exceptional divine nature, but it belongs to all men; so He says now, It is not true only in these special, temporary conditions; it has always been true. The best and most human men have always known it, — that man was soul as well as body, and that he did not really live unless he had not merely bread for the body, but truth and duty, God's word, for the soul.

This was the certainty, then, to which Jesus came in the wilderness; a certainty both from consciousness and from experience. Now, if we can put ourselves into Christ's position; if we can see, as it were, this cer-

tainty growing up in His soul, then we have before us the perfect picture of the opening struggle of every noble life. The life begins in sense. The existence of childhood is all a bondage to the senses. Gradually it emerges, but very slowly, very unconsciously; until at last there comes some test. As we study the Gospels, and think upon human life, it becomes very wonderful, it seems to me, how, in the very order of its circumstances as well as in its drift and spirit, that life of Jesus represents the lives of all men. Just at the outset of our work, to try us whether we are good for our work, God's Spirit takes us into some solitude, some experience which, whether it be enacted far off in the woods, or in the very centre of a crowded street, makes us realize for the first time that our deepest life is alone, is ours and no other man's; that we cannot live in our fathers and our mothers; that we must live for ourselves. That is our wilderness, — that first realization of our individuality. In that wilderness, in that first conception of himself as a responsible and solitary being, every young man meets the same devil that the young Jesus met. And the temptation is the same; the assurance given in some form or other that bread is all that a man needs; that everything else is a delusion; that to live a life of physical comfort is the only solid wish for a man's soul. Perhaps it is a business which he knows is wrong, but sees must be profitable. Perhaps it is the abandonment of those he ought to care for so that he may himself get rich. Perhaps it is the hiding of his sincere convictions in order to keep his place in some social company. Perhaps it is connivance with a wicked man's sin in order to preserve his favor. Perhaps it is the postponing of charity to

some future day when it shall be easier. Perhaps it is a refusal to acknowledge Christ, the Master, out of fear, or because some easy, foolish friendship would be sacrificed. Perhaps it is simply the giving up of ambitions, intellectual or spiritual, for the sake of quiet, unperturbed respectability. These are real struggles. There is no boy who comes into the life which Jesus entered in His Incarnation who does not pass through the door which He passed through, and meet the devil of these questions where He met him. And the answer that every modern young man makes, the victory which he wins, if he does win, must be like Christ's, too. That double witness, that decree of God written on the two tables of consciousness and experience, must be, and is, what every man appeals to, who, taking his stand before the tempter, says, "No! I will live not for bread alone, but for truth and duty." He appeals first to consciousness. "Tell me," he says to his tempter, "here are certain powers in me, powers of studying, thinking, loving, generously suffering. What am I to do with those powers in the life which you want me to live? It cannot be that that is the life which I was meant to live, or these powers would not be in me. Man cannot live by bread alone." And then he appeals to experience. "Other men, in other days, have lived not for the flesh, but for the spirit, and have left it on record that though they missed of wealth and fame, they knew that so they found their true life. Their history confirms my study of myself. I read my duty in their stories. 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.'" That is the way in which the young man, to-day, here among us, enters by the same two-leaved door into the same victory which

Jesus won years ago upon that dark and dreary hill in Palestine.

I know this seems to be drawing the picture too dramatically. "There was no such trial-moment, no such crisis in my life," you say. "There has been nothing to compare with that awful mountain and the darkness and the hunger and the present Satan." But still the same has come to you that came to Christ. The dramatic incidents were not essential then. Jesus might have had all that temptation while he sat in His mother's house at Nazareth, or while He travelled in the noisy caravan returning from Jerusalem. In either place He might have yielded and given up the work that He had come for. In either place He might have seen the glory of that work, and surrendered everything else for the privilege of doing it. If Christ had yielded, can we not picture Him as He descends the mountain? He has tasted bread. His knees are strong. His famished body has received new vigor, but what a weight is on His soul! How He loathes the bread that He has eaten! How beautiful seems the chance that He has cast away! What a terrible defeat! And so one wonders if the men who have given up their chance of usefulness and goodness, merely to live an easy life, do not ache through all their luxury with the sense of their defeat and of all that they have lost. So many of our lives come crawling down the mountain, well-fed and comfortable, despising themselves and envying the poor hungry men who still are doing some of God's work, and living the lives He gave them. But draw the other picture in your mind. Think of Christ after He has conquered, coming down with His victory won, with His life yet to live indeed, with His

work and suffering still before Him, but with the resolution, the principle, of His life established, and there is your man who has chosen right, who from His own consciousness and from the best experience of all best men has learned indeed that it is not by bread alone, but by the word of God, that He must live.

But let us ask now a little more carefully, what it is for which consciousness and the best experience of our race unite in saying that the immediate advantage and pleasure of the senses must be surrendered. Jesus described it to His tempter as "The word of God." "Not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And the word of God includes two notions, one of revelation and one of commandment. Whenever God speaks by any of His voices, it is first to tell us some truth which we did not know before, and second to bid us do something which we have not been doing. Every word of God includes these two. Truth and duty are always wedded. There is no truth which has not its corresponding duty. And there is no duty which has not its corresponding truth. We are always separating them. We are always trying to learn truths, as if there were no duties belonging to them, as if the knowing of them would make no difference in the way we lived. That is the reason why our hold on the truths we learn is so weak. And we are always trying to do duties as if there were no truths behind them; as if, that is, they were mere arbitrary things which rested on no principles and had no intelligible reasons. That is the reason why we do our duties so superficially and unreliably. When every truth is rounded into its duty, and every duty is deepened into its truth, then we shall have

a clearness and consistency and permanence of moral life which we hardly dream of now.

Every word of God, then, is both truth and duty, revelation and commandment. He who takes any new word of God completely gets both a new truth and a new duty. He, then, who lives by every word of God, is a man who is continually seeing new truth and accepting the duties that arise out of it. And it is for this, for the pleasure of seeing truth and doing its attendant duty, that he is willing to give up the pleasures of sense, and even, if need be, to give up the bodily life to which the pleasures of sense belong. As a man keeps or loses his capacity of doing this, of weighing these two against each other, and deciding rightly which is the more precious, he keeps or loses his manhood. The real first question that you want to ask about any new man whom you meet, and whom you desire to measure, is not whether he is rich or poor, fashionable or unfashionable, learned or unlearned, but whether he has kept this capacity; whether if God showed him that something was true and out of that truth there issued some duty for him, he would be able and willing to put his comfort aside, and take the duty and perform it. I think that one of the most interesting things about our relations to our fellow-men is the way in which we feel in them the presence or the absence of this capacity. I do not say that our feeling about them is unerring. Again and again we find ourselves mistaken. But about almost every man whom we know, I think we have some feeling of this sort. To each one we apply this test. Two men are living side by side, in the same comfort, in the same easy business. Every want of each is satisfied completely. How is it that I

know about these men that if God were to make known to both of them together the truth that a multitude of His people were being wronged, and the consequent duty were plain to both of them that they ought to brave everything and sacrifice everything to claim their rights for the oppressed, one of them would certainly leave his house and all his luxuries without a moment's hesitation to go and do this work, and the other would refuse the task, and let the wrongs go on unrighted till the judgment day? Why is it that we feel the difference? Why is it that we cannot help thinking whether every man is living by bread or living by the word of God? It is because that is the real fundamental mark of manhood. It is because all other distinctions between man and man are superficial and insignificant. That alone lets us see thoroughly what sort of men they are.

Our judgments of other men, by this or any other standard, are of small account. We come to feel more and more, I think, how utterly unimportant is what we think of our brethren, or what they think of us. It is generally all wrong, or, if right, it is right by accident. But how is it with our judgments of ourselves? Can we ask ourselves what we are living by? If the test came to us, if our superficial anxieties about ourselves were swept aside, so that the only real anxiety which a man has a right to feel about his life were manifest, as a strong wind sweeps the mist out of the mountain valley and lets us see the rock, is there any rock there to see, any real care for truth and righteousness, for the truth that issues in duty and the duty that comes by truth?

I know with what a rebuke such questions come to all of us. I know how they uncover the shallowness and

selfishness in which we live. As we ask them of ourselves, and look around upon the world, it seems sometimes as if it all were hopeless; as if everybody was living by bread alone, and nobody by the word of God, which we saw meant truth and duty. But on this as on all subjects connected with the actual condition of mankind, I hold that despair and misanthropy are no less false in fact, and are even more mischievous as a philosophy, than the other extreme of optimism. While we do see men slaves to their senses, sacrificing the true to the easier false, and duty to the immediate expediency, there is, and every man ought to know for his encouragement that there is, a deep and constant witness in human history of man's undying capacity for the higher life. We must not lose sight of it. The temptation of Jesus was, as I think we saw, not a splendid, solitary victory of divinity over human conditions. It was the assertion of the possible victory that waits for every man who, like Christ, has in him the power of divinity. Jesus found in His human consciousness the original purpose of human life. He brought it out clearly. He said, It is not the divine prerogative alone. Here it is in man, — the power to live, not for comfort but for truth and duty. Here it is in this humanity of mine, along with all else that is truly human, all my tastes and propensities, all my aches and pains. Here it is in me, and, lo! other men have found it in themselves. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."

And men, all the more clearly since Jesus showed it there, are always finding in their own consciousness, and in the prolonged consciousness of their race which we call experience or history, this same higher capacity or

higher necessity of man. They find it in their own consciousness. What do we make of every strong young man's discontent with the actual conditions of things before he settles down into the limited contentment, the sense that things are about as good as they are likely to be, which makes up the dull remainder of his life? Question yourself and see how there is something in you which rebels when the lower expediency of any action is set before you as its sufficient justification, how something rises up in you and tells you that there is a higher expediency, and makes you want to sweep away the worldly maxims which you cannot confute, but which you know are false. Sometimes there comes in all of us a strong, deep craving to give up this endless, complicated search after what it is safe or proper or fashionable to believe, and just to seek what is true; and to get rid of these thousand artificial standards of what a man is expected to do, and, come of it what will, simply do what is right: and when we are simply asking, "What is right?" the answer always comes. Sometimes the buried giant, conscience, stirs under the mountain, and shakes all the villages and vineyards which we have planted on its sides. And then we are merely finding in ourselves, in our humanity, what Jesus found in His when, with the devil drawing Him away, He put His hand down to the depths of the nature which He had assumed, and took out from under all the accumulated rubbish of low and artificial needs the original, essential intention of man's life, which had been lying there ever since the day when God made man in His image.

One cannot be a misanthrope or a sceptic about this. There always is this deeper power in man, and men are

always finding it there. I think we are amazed not at the rarity, but rather at the abundance, of the power of martyrdom. When a great cause breaks out in war, and needs its champions, how wonderful it is to us, with our low notions of humanity, to see the land with its furrows full of the deserted plows from which the men have run to go and die for principle, and save their country. How wonderfully frequent are the stories that we hear of men giving their lives to do their duty. The exception is where the engineer of the railroad train which is rushing into certain ruin deserts his post; not where he stands still and calm, and is found with the iron clenched in his dead hand. No doubt, if he had time to think of it at all, he would be surprised at himself in the terrible instant when his quick resolve was made. He reaches down through the ordinary standards of his life, and takes up the deepest one of all, and says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God; and the word of God which is my duty now says, Stand and die; and so I cannot live except by dying." And in spite of all the men who are sacrificing their convictions to their interests, there are thousands of men who might be at the head of things, and rich and famous, if they would only give up what they think is true for bread. Oh, it is very common! Men find in their own nature necessities which they must submit to, and they do submit to them. We can hear in their submission, though it makes them very poor, something of that same trumpet-like triumph and exaltation which I think we always feel in those words from the lips of the sick and hungry Jesus, "Not by bread alone, but by the word of God."

And what a man finds in his own consciousness, he

is strengthened by being able also to recognize in the whole history of his race. "It is written" long ago, this which he is doing now. He is only tracing over with his blood the unfaded characters which other men have written in theirs. It is not a mere whim of his, this conviction that it is better to serve God than to eat bread. It is the corporate conviction of mankind. That is a very mysterious support, but it is a real one. It plants the weak tree of your will or mine into the rich soil of humanity. Do not lose that strength. Do not so misread history that it shall seem to you when you try to do right as if you were the first man that ever tried it. Put yourself with your weak little struggle into the company of all the strugglers in all time. Recognize in your little fight against your avarice, or your untruthfulness, or your laziness, only one skirmish in that battle whose field covers the earth, and whose clamor rises and falls from age to age, but never wholly dies. See in the perpetual struggle of good and evil that the impulse after good is eternal, and the higher needs are always asserting their necessity. In their persistent assertion read the prophecy of their final success and take courage.

In consciousness and in experience man finds the witness of his higher nature. But consciousness and experience both of them are weak in all of us. Here is where the revelation of Christ comes in. Christ is both the revealer of a man's life to himself, and the revealer of the world's life to all of us. When I thoroughly apprehend the story of the Gospels, I can see what my own nature means in its mysterious movements, and I can discover forces which have been at work in all the history of mankind to which I have before been blind. As I be-

come His servant, the necessity of doing right and knowing truth comes out from my own consciousness and declares itself. As I see in Him the ruler of history, all history becomes luminous with this struggle of the better power in man to get the upper hand. This makes clear what perhaps you have doubted about as I have spoken to you this morning. I have seemed to point to man's consciousness and to human history as the revealers of man's capacity for truth and duty. "Is it not Christ," you say, "who alone can bring or show us any good?"

Yes indeed and always that is true. But it is by His touch laid upon our own natures and the world's experience that he sends His light to us. It is He who gives them all their voice. Mere stammerers and whisperers before, it has been by Him that they have learned to speak and give men their incitement and hope.

Ah, here is the true secret. It is when Christ is in you that the highest motives become practically powerful upon your life. We think of Christ as the liberator. To many souls it is His most attractive character. But we do need to know what the character of the liberation which He brings us is. It is not simply that as we lie chained upon the ground He comes and breaks our chains, and lets us lie there still, bound down by the torpor which our chained condition has created in us, slaves to our own inability to rise. That is not the glorious redemption. That is a purely negative freedom. What Christ desires to do for you is something far nobler and more divine than that. He wants to awaken your dead conscience and to quicken into life and invitation the apparently dead and depressing experience around you, so that you shall feel in yourself the response to higher motives, and

recognize in all history the loftier and more spiritual possibility of man. If He could do that for you, then there would be real liberation. You would no longer be the slave of sensible things, not because you had learned to despise them, not because you thought your business, or your home, or your social pleasure contemptible or wicked, but because you had seen the joy of higher things, — truth, God, charity, character, heaven, — and the channel of affection was clear between them and your soul. That is true liberty. It does not cast the lower things away. As Christ said to Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone." He shall live by bread, but not by bread alone. The lower wants are recognized. The things that supplied them are not thrown away, but they are used no longer to enslave and bind, but simply to sustain and steady the life which moves now under spiritual impulse; as the ship which has cast loose from its bondage to the shore and goes with wind and steam exultantly out to sea still carries some of that shore for ballast in its hold. That is the relation which the spiritual man still holds to the things of the senses. The man in Christ makes the world serve no longer as dock, but as ballast; no longer as confinement, but as balance for the new life which he lives.

There is great meaning in the words that Jesus was continually using to describe the work that He did for men's souls. He brought them into "the kingdom of God." The whole burden of His preaching was to establish the kingdom of God. The purpose of the new birth for which He labored was to make men subjects of the kingdom of God. Is it not clear what it means? The kingdom of God for any soul is that condition, anywhere

in the universe, where God is that soul's king, where it seeks and obeys the highest, where it loves truth and duty more than comfort and luxury. Have you entered into the kingdom of God? Oh, how much that means. Has any love of God taken possession of you so that you want to do His will above all things, and try to do it all the time? Has Christ brought you there? If He has, how great and new and glorious the life of the kingdom seems. No wonder that He said you must be born again before you could enter there. How poor life seems outside that kingdom! How beautiful and glorious inside its gates!

If I tried to tell you how Christ brings us there, I should repeat to you once more the old, familiar story He comes and lives and dies for us. He touches us with gratitude. He sets before our softened lives His life. He makes us see the beauty of holiness, and the strength of the spiritual life in Him. He transfers His life to us through the open channel of faith, and so we come to live as He lives, by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. How old the story is, but how endlessly fresh and true to him whose own career it describes.

In this world we must be either conquerors or slaves. We know what it is to be the world's slaves, but what it is to be its conquerors through Christ, that no man knows entirely. We come to know it more and more as the long struggle and fight go on. We shall know it perfectly only when the liberated spirit casts the flesh away and goes to live with the God by whom it has lived so long.

XVI.

THE SYMBOL AND THE REALITY.

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day: neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." — ISAIAH lx. 19.

IN the midst of the glowing picture of Messiah's kingdom, which Isaiah draws, occur these words. He is telling of the wonderful changes which are to come when mankind shall have reached perfection under the government of its perfect master. Especially he is speaking to the Jewish church and nation. The pages are bright with promises. "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." And then there comes this other promise, which I quoted for my text. The prophet bids his people look forward to a time when even the sun and moon shall become needless to them; when in some new and more direct experience of God they shall need nothing to reflect His light to them, but drink immediately from Himself His strength and inspiration. That seems to be the meaning of the words; and so it points us to one feature which belongs to every progress, the power to do without one

thing after another which has before been essential, the way in which, as we advance to higher and higher supplies, we are able to gather out of them what we used to get from lower sources. It is like that verse in St. John's description of the New Jerusalem: "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Or like these soberer words of St. Paul's autobiography: "When I became a man I put away childish things." This life that rises to the highest helps and companies is able easily to do without the lower.

There is no better test of men's progress than this advancing power to do without the things which used to be essential to their lives. As we climb a high mountain we must keep our footing strong upon one ledge until we have fastened ourselves strongly on the next. Then we may let the lower foothold go. The lives of men who have been always growing are strewed along their whole course with the things which they have learned to do without. As the track of an army marching deep into an enemy's country is scattered all along with the equipage which the men seemed to find necessary when they started, but which they have learned to do without as the exigencies of their march grew greater, and they found that these provisions and equipments were partly such as they did not need at all, and partly such as they could gather out of the land through which they marched; so from the time when the child casts his leading strings aside because his legs are strong enough to carry him alone, the growing man goes on forever leaving each help for a higher, until at last, in that great change to which Isaiah's words seem to apply, he can do without sun and moon as he enters into the immediate presence and essential life of God.

For everything is valuable only in relation to the powers and tastes to which it is of use. Nothing has any value which does not meet and satisfy the hunger of some organ of our life, and everything has value only for that organ, and that condition of any organ, which it satisfies. Books have no value, directly, for the taste, nor bread for the mind. Now every power that is in us, if it is healthy, hungers after food, and it will seize like any hungry thing on what food it can find. But every power is capable of culture, capable of being brought up to appreciate higher and higher foods. And as each power comes to a higher condition, and finds its higher food and learns to love it, it is able to let go the food in which it has delighted simply because it must delight in something, and to rest in its new-found higher satisfaction. And what is true of every single power is true about the aggregate of powers, — our total self considered as one whole. We must have what will give us pleasure and occupy our lives. But as we grow we come to the capacity of higher pleasures and higher occupations, and so let go the lower ones; not by compulsion, because we cannot hold them any longer, but from the satisfaction of our newer lives; because we have got something else better than they are, and can do without them now. This is the way in which a true man puts away childish things. This is the meaning of that pleasing sort of regret with which we sometimes go back to the occupations of our childhood, to the books we used to read, the tasks we used to study, the friends with whom we trifled, the fields where we idly wandered. We think we want all these things back again. We think we should be happy if they were all restored to us once

more, but when we touch them we find their charm is gone; and with a strange and pathetic mixture of discontent and pride, of pain and joy, we learn that he who has grown to any higher life not only may, but must, do without his old satisfactions. Sometimes you see a young man who has not grown. No higher work, no higher life has opened to him; and what marks him as different from his growing comrades, what shows how they have outstripped him, is just this: that they can do without what he must have. They have put away childish things for their manly occupations, while he must still be busy with his little vanities and conceits and plays and emulations, because he has grown up to nothing else, as the idiot of forty will play still with the toys of babyhood.

Now this change from childhood into manhood is only the picture of all the spiritual and moral advances which men make through all their lives. Every imperfect condition is to the perfect condition what the child's life is to the man's life; and the advance from one to the other, if we examine it, is always a change into greater and more complete reality. The things which childhood values are the symbols or types of the things which the man will value by and by, and the reason why the man is able to let the child's treasures drop and do without them is that he has reached the reality which those precious things of childhood only represented. The man does not want the boy's sports, because he has found in the serious work of life the true field for those emulations and activities which were only practising and trying themselves in the play-ground. The man can do without the boy's perpetual physical activity, because he has

come to the pleasures of an active mind which the restlessness of the child's body, his pleasure in mere movement, anticipated and prophesied. It seems as if the change from boyhood into a true manhood could not be more justly described than as an advance from dealing with symbols to dealing with realities. And if, then, every progress in life is a change from some new boyhood to some yet riper manhood; if every man is a child to his own possible maturer self; may it not be truly stated that all the spiritual advances of life are advances from some symbol to its reality, and that the abandoned interests and occupations which strew the path which we have travelled are the symbols which we have cast away easily because we had grasped the realities for which they stood?

Such an idea, if it were true, would seem to help and enlighten us in various ways. It would make us look with complacency, without regret, upon the things which we have left behind us. It would help us to understand our neighbors who make nothing of, or make very light of, what we prize very much. On the other hand, it would give us a charitable understanding of and hope for our other neighbors who are still caring very much about things which we have ceased to value; and it would allow us to find great pleasure in many things, while all the time we know that we cannot rest in them forever, that sometime we must pass beyond them to the higher and complete things of which they are only the symbols.

Let us take two or three instances of those things which are valuable as symbols, but which he is able to do without who has got beyond the symbol and gained the reality which it represents. Take the instance of wealth.

There are some men who can do without being rich, — plenty of men who have to, but some men who can, can easily, can without discontent or trouble. They have the universal human passions. They are not monsters in the shape of men, much as it may appear as if they were, in the midst of the crowd of money seekers. They love comfort and respectability as much as these their neighbors. What is the difference? Simply this, that they have found that comfort and respectability, while money is their natural symbol, are not dependent upon money and that one may reach past the symbol and take the reality, and let the symbol go. Is it not true, and is it not striking, that while we all feel that comfort and respectability are naturally symbolized by wealth, yet the most comfortable and respectable men in town are not always, perhaps are very rarely, the wealthiest men? The symbol is good, but there will always be some men who have seized the reality so completely that they can do without the symbol. How it shows when two men fail. One of them keeps his honor, his good repute, his self-respect, and he can do without money. He has the reality, and can let the symbol go. The other man has nothing: no respect of other men, no respect of himself. He has nothing but the money. When that is gone he has nothing. He cannot do without it, and so he flees to the pistol, or the poison, or the river. There is this lamentable lack of the power to do without money, which makes these men the slave of their money. The fact is that every symbol ought to be always fitting us to do without itself. Money ought to be making us indifferent to money; to be preparing us to be cheerfully poor; to be building tastes and powers within itself, like a house

within a scaffolding, so that the scaffolding may come down and the house still stand. For how many of our rich men is their wealth doing that; but certainly, if his wealth is not doing that for a man, he is the slave of his wealth and not its master.

Or take another symbol. Praise is good. To be applauded by our fellow-men, to hear our ambitions about ourselves caught up by their testifying cheers, to have our own best hopes for our own lives confirmed by their appreciation of us, that is a true delight for any man. To be able to do without men's praise because we do not feel its value, because morosely and selfishly we do not care what men think, that is bad; that is a sign of feebleness and conceit. To feel it is wretched, and to affect to feel it is detestable. But to be able to do without men's praise because that which their praise stands for is dearer to us than the praise is, and it so happens that we cannot have both of them, that is a wholly different thing. The first man has sunk below the necessity of men's applause, the second man has risen above it. The poor, demoralized beggar and the calm, philosophic servant of God, standing together in the street, neither of them may care much whether men praise or blame him, — both of them can do without applause. But how different they are. Both can do without the sunlight; but one is the mole crawling out of sight of the sun under ground, the other is the angel who lives beyond the sun with God. For men's praise stands for goodness. Every man feels that if it does not mean that, if it is given to iniquity just as freely as to goodness, praise loses all its value. Praise is the symbol; goodness is the reality. But if we cannot let the praise go in order to be good,

if we dare not do right though every tongue of man broke out in wild abuse of us together, then once more the symbol has us in its tyranny. We are not its masters, able to do without it, able to say to it any day, "You may go now; I have used you long enough. You have done all that you can for me. Now you are beginning not to help me, but to harm me." We are its servants, only daring to ask of it humbly, "What would you have me do that I may more completely win your favor, O praise of men?"

So it runs everywhere. The symbols of the deeper pleasures are the mere animal indulgences, — eating and drinking, the lusts of the flesh. They stand for intellectual and spiritual joys. How natural their symbolism is. The Bible talks of "hungering and thirsting after righteousness." David says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Jesus tells His disciples about "eating His flesh and drinking His blood." The superficial emotions of the senses stand for and represent the profound emotions of the soul. In the harmonious life the two will live in harmony. The symbol and reality, the body's and the soul's enjoyment, will be complete together. But when in this unharmonious life in which we live the symbol and reality come into unnatural conflict, when either the soul must be sacrificed to the body or the body to the soul, he who really knows what the soul's happiness is does not hesitate. He is able to do without the sensual delight. He can be hungry and thirsty, and deny every lust its indulgence, that he may be pure and true and godly. He can be starved and famished in the symbol, that he may eat and drink deep of the reality. You say, 'I cannot do it. These passions at least must have their

way. I was made so. I cannot do without this gratification." No, certainly not, unless you can come to what that gratification stands for. If you can do that; if you can really see the beauty of goodness and purity, and love that; and then if this gratification coming in conflict with them means sin, then you can easily lose it for it will have lost its charm for you. Not that it will seem better to you to be good than to be happy, as men sometimes say, but the only possible happiness for you will be in being good.

You see that I am speaking not only of things that are wrong in themselves. Nay; I am speaking mainly of things which are not wrong in themselves, but which the time comes for a man to do without because he cannot have them and the better things which they represent together. A tree's leaves are symbols; they mean growth; they stand for health and life as they rustle and sparkle in the summer wind and sunshine. But the day comes when the tree, to keep its healthy life, must cast its leaves aside and stand bare and naked through the long winter, losing the symbol to keep the reality. A man's limbs mean manhood. They stand for the fact of his manly strength to himself and to the world. But the time comes in battle, at his sentry post, when the man must either lose his limbs or lose his honor; and then, rather than be a coward, he lets a part of himself go; for now to be maimed and not to be complete means strength and the perfectness of manhood. And here is the power of true self-sacrifice; here is the secret which takes out of it all the bitterness and brutality. Always it is the giving up of a symbol that you may have the reality. In the great sacrifice of all, Christ lays down His life, but it is

that He may take it again. Do you think that Christ did not care for life and all that makes life beautiful to us? Surely He did, but He cared more for that which they represent, — the living purely, the doing of His Father's will, and the serving of His brethren. That was why He was able to do without the things which seem to be absolutely essential to our lives; because He was so much more full than we are of the beauty and glory of the life with God. That was the power by which He was able to speak harsh words when He would gladly have indulged Himself in speaking kind and soft words. And when we control our weak good-nature, and will not do some mere indulgent action to a friend or child, in order that we may help that child or friend to some manly work or vigorous self-control, we are doing in our way what Jesus did when He surrendered the mere pleasure of pleasing the world for the higher and more perfect joy of saving the world.

I am very much impressed by the truth of all this as concerns the Christian Church. She has her symbols and her ordinances, and she has her true and inner life. Her outward ways of living really belong with her inward power. In a perfectly harmonious world there never could be any conflict. In Heaven the outward and the inward church shall absolutely correspond; but here and now the church may be so set upon her symbols and her regularities that she shall fail of doing her most perfect work and living her most perfect life. The Christian may be so bound to rites and ceremonies that he loses the God to whom they ought to bring him near. The congregation may be so jealous for its liturgy that it loses the power of prayer The church at large may make so

much of its apostolic ministry that it loses the present ministry of Christ Himself. Here it certainly is true that no symbol is doing its true work unless it is educating those who use it to do without itself, if need be. The Christian is misusing his rites and ceremonies, unless they are bringing him more personally and immediately near to God. The congregation is not using its liturgy aright if it is getting more and more unable to worship except in just that form and order; and the church is suffering and not thriving by her ancient ministry if she is making it exclusive and mechanical, and calling none the ministers of Christ who have not that ordination. Everywhere the letter stands for the spirit, and to give up the letter, that the spirit may live more fully, becomes from time to time the absolute necessity of the living church.

Have I then made clear our law? Among the tests of men there stands very high this power to do without. A man says, "You need not talk to me about this luxury, this habit. The time may come when I shall have to sacrifice my principle to keep it, but I cannot live without it." Another man says, "I like this, but I despise the thought that it should become essential to me, that I should not be able to do without it. Are not those two men ranked? Do you not know which is the greater and the stronger, which is the smaller and the weaker man? But then this power of doing without some things is, we have seen, at its bottom a power of not doing without other things. We are rescued from the abject slavery of the lower by entering into the absolute servantship of the higher. He to whom honor is necessary can do without money. He who must have goodness

can get along without praise. He who must have God's communion can do without the sweet companionships of fellow-men. He who cannot lose his eternity can easily cast aside time and the body which belongs to it, and by the martyr's slow or sudden death exchange the visible for the invisible, the symbol for the reality. Nay, he who values most intensely his friend's or his child's eternal life can, not easily but still not grudgingly, let go the joy and daily comfort of his friend's or his child's hourly presence, and see him die that he may enter into life. On these two ladders, as it were, by these two scales, the order of human character mounts up, — the power to do without and the power not to do without. As you grow better there are some things which are always growing looser in their grasp upon you; there are other things which are always taking tighter hold upon your life. You sweep up out of the grasp of money, praise, ease, distinction. You sweep up into the necessity of truth, courage, virtue, love, and God. The gravitation of the earth grows weaker, the gravitation of the stars takes stronger and stronger hold upon you. And on the other hand, as you grow worse, as you go down, the terrible opposite of all this comes to pass. The highest necessities let you go, and the lowest necessities take tighter hold of you. Still, as you go down, you are judged by what you can do without and what you cannot do without. You come down at last where you cannot do without a comfortable dinner and an easy bed, but you can do without an act of charity or a thought of God. The poor sot finds his misery sealed with this double seal, that he cannot miss his glass of liquor, and he can miss without a sigh every good company and virtuous wish.

Oh, test your lives by this. Judge where you stand by what are your necessities. Oh, stretch yourselves and see where you touch your chains, and thank God if you are really, by His culture, growing more and more able to spare the temporary symbols, less and less able to do without the eternal realities of life.

But now, before I close, let me try to answer one or two questions which I most earnestly hope have arisen in some of your minds while I have spoken. I think that I have spoken in vain unless some such questions have sprung up. First you will ask, How can I tell the symbol from the reality, and so know what things it is good to hold less and less, what things it is good to hold more and more indispensable? It is not easy to give the answer in a rule. But the answer no doubt lies in a certain feeling of spirituality and infiniteness and eternity, which belongs to those things which it is good for a man not to be able to do without. Those things which serve the soul rather than the body, those which serve the whole of us and not one special part, and those which can serve us longest, — those are the things which we want to make more and more indispensable. Those things whose usefulness belongs mainly to the body, those things which help some part of us and not the whole, and those things whose use is temporary, — it is not good for any of us to have to say, "I cannot do without these things." This is, perhaps, the nearest that we can come to rules; but he who lives in the spirit of these rules acquires a certain sort of feeling of the infiniteness of some things and the finiteness of others, so that renown, wealth, dignity, sympathy, comfort, friendship, amusement, life, stand on one side; and honor, truth, bravery, purity, love, eter-

nity, God, stand on the other. These last he must have Those others he can do without. The moment that he touches any new gift he can tell to which order it belongs.

But then you say, What then? When I have felt this difference, when I know what things I must not allow to become indispensable to me, what shall I do then? Shall I throw all those things away? Shall I strip my life instantly of all that is not indispensable, and live only in those things which I cannot live without? No; certainly not. That effort to cast away the symbol as soon as it was seen to be a symbol has been the source of much religious unhappiness and failure, and of much of the wrong kind of separation between religious and irreligious life. Not to give up the symbol, but to hold it as a symbol, with that looser grasp which lets its inner reality escape into us, and at the same time makes us always ready to let it go when the reality shall have wholly opened from it, that is the true duty of the Christian as concerns the innocent things of the world. That was the way in which Jesus always seemed to be holding friendship, home, nature, and His own human life; never grasping them so tightly that their spiritual meanings might not come forth from them freely, nor that He could not give them up when a higher vocation summoned Him. The Christian is a man in the world. The difference between him and the man of the world must not be in sharp separation of all their occupations. It must be in the different ways in which they hold their worldly things. How easily, with what a sense of mastery, you hold what all the time you know that you can do without. The beggar, the ruined man, the poor woman,

with just one piece of money left, with no chance to get another if that is lost, clutches that piece of money tight, and, casting suspicious looks on every side, hurries along the street. The rich man, with his balance in the banks, holds his one coin lightly, and without anxiety parts with it with an easy grace for luxury or charity. That is the difference between the religious and the irreligious use of the world. The Christian works by your side in business or society, but do not think that business is to him the absorbing anxiety, or society the feverish race, that it is to you. He has not staked his everything upon their game. He can afford to lose, and yet go away calm and with the infiniteness of his life untouched. He is like Jesus, whom His disciples could not understand. They said unto Him, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him aught to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. So the Christian, with larger, looser grasp, holds the things of earth and gathers out of them all the more richness and strength because he is not their slave, but their master, and can do without them if his higher duties or interests shall need it.

There is nothing that impresses us all so much as to see another man easily do without what is the very life of our life. "This man has not my money," you say, "but he would have it if he could. He goes without it only because he cannot get it." But by and by you see another man put money which he might have under his feet, and for the sake of learning or religion quietly take up the life of poverty. That startles you. You cannot

understand it. But is it not true that all of us have had our best revelations of the value of things out of just such sights as that; have had our false despotic standards thrown off their pedestals when we saw a nobler man easily neglect them, as the idol fell down on his face when the ark of Jehovah was brought into the house of Dagon, the Philistine's god?

And that brings us to the last question. How shall I come to count nothing indispensable but what I really ought to, what I really cannot do without? The answer to that question is in Christ, who holds the answers of all our questions for us. As I read the Gospels I can see how, little by little, Jesus lifted those disciples past one conception of necessity after another, until at last they knew nothing that was absolutely necessary except God. They began as fishermen who could not do without their nets and boats and houses and fishing friends and sports and gains and gossipings. He carried them up till they were crying, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." That wonderful change — how wonderful it was we forget, because the story is so familiar — He brought about by showing them His salvation. When, living with Him, they saw the glory of forgiveness and regeneration, saw the new life that opened before those who really knew His grace, everything changed to them. It was not so important how they fared, what food they ate, what they wore, how many fish they caught. "All these things do the nations of the earth seek after." To them the questions shifted. The tests of life swept higher up. Were they indeed His? Had they caught His spirit? Were they living His life? Had they part in His eternity? And so when you and I really desire the salvation of

Christ, He will do for us all that He did for them. Our tests of life, too, shall sweep up. Not, Is my body well? but, Is the soul strong? Not, Is my friend sure to live here by my side? but, Is he living with God? Not, Am I myself sure of the life here? but, Am I already living the life that is forever? Health, companionship, life itself, these are no longer indispensable when Christ has shown us God. A resignation that is not despair, but aspiration; a looser grasp on time, that means how strongly we are holding to eternity; this must come to us when, after all our doing of little temporary things, we have at last begun in Christ the life and work that is to go on forever and forever. Then even the most essential things of this world we can do without, if need be. We have passed from the lower to the higher necessities. We walk by faith, and not by sight. Already, even while we are yet in the flesh, before we cross the river, the promise finds its fulfilment. We live in the world, but we do not live by the world. Already the sun is no more our light by day; neither for brightness doth the moon give light unto us; but the Lord is unto us an everlasting light, and our God our glory.

XVII.

CHRIST'S WISH FOR MAN.

"**Father**, I will that they also whom Thou hast given **me be with me where I am**; that they may behold my glory." — JOHN xvii. 24.

THE truth that men are judged by their desires finds its highest illustration in Jesus. The perfection of His nature is shown in the perfectness of His wishes. When His desires shall be all fulfilled, when He "shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied," then the consummation of all things will have been reached, and there will be nothing more in the universe to be desired.

Let us take this morning one of Christ's wishes and study it, see what it means, and what would be the effect of its fulfilment. It is a prayer; but a prayer in its simplest definition is merely a wish turned Godward. It was the instinct of Christ's nature that He looked for the fulfilment of His wishes, not to Himself and not to the things about Him, but to His Father; and so in His prayer we have simply the utterance Godward of what He was desiring in His heart: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

This wish was spoken at Christ's last supper with His disciples. They were sitting late around their simple table, and soon their separation was to come, the betrayal and the crucifixion. The first interest of the

words, then, that which introduces us to and makes us ready for all the deeper things which they express, is their obvious meaning as an expression of the Saviour's affection for His disciples, His dread of being separated from them. When friend is going away from friend, how naturally the wish springs up into words: "Oh, if I could only take you with me! The country where I am going may be very bright; the work that waits me there may be all-absorbing. I know that new friendships will be ready for me there; I know that it is better for you to tarry here. But just at this moment all that is overflowed by one desire that springs out of our affectionate companionship. I dread to be separated from you. Oh, that you might be with me where I am." Now the sublimity and the charm of the earthly life of Jesus consist in large part in the broad and healthy action of the simplest human powers which it exhibits. It is not in anything subtle or complicated. The simplest natures are the grandest natures always. The broad perception of principles, the hearty appreciation of character, the strong feeling and frank utterance of emotion, — these are what always mark the truly greatest men. And so it is a part of the greatness of Jesus that He so simply feels and utters this cordial human affection, and, as He looks round into the familiar faces of the twelve, says, "I dread to leave you behind me. I shall miss you. I wish you could go with me. I will that you should be with me where I am." We want not merely to admire this in Jesus; not merely to feel its charm. We want to catch it from Him; we want to let it reveal to us what the true dignity of human life is. Elaborate civilization is always making elaborate,

artificial standards. To be acute and subtle and skilful in some specialized working of the mind, to be secretive and ingenious, to admire nothing, and never to give way to the affections, — those are the dispositions which a complicated life is always setting up to make its modern man. Christ Jesus lets us see that the true nobility is a broad and sensitive nature, lying wide open to the influences of God, easily feeling and frankly uttering the first true emotions. Let us try to catch the lesson and win something of His unaffected breadth and truth.

But now we go on farther. These primary emotions do exist in Jesus, the proof-marks of His true humanity, the patterns for all humanity; but they are deeper and richer things in Him than in ordinary men, in proportion to the depth and richness of His human nature and the divinity that was mingled with it. This is what we are used to seeing. The same emotion exists in different men, but it becomes more full and perfect as the man is more and greater. The color deepens with the body and solidity of the material into which it is wrought. Fear is one thing for a coward who shakes at every trembling leaf, and another for a strong man who looks forward into the far consequences of things, and trembles at the unrelenting persistency with which a sin dogs the wrong-doer to his punishment. What a totally different thing scorn is in the feeble sneer of the cynic and in the lofty contempt which nobleness has for meanness. How sorrow deepens from the superficial grief of a superficial mourner at a funeral, all tears and crape, to the deep, silent woe that settles into the very centre of a strong, loving character, and makes every day thenceforth, till death comes with its release, different from all the days that

went before. Nowhere is all this more true than about companionship. For two beings to be with one another always means the same simple thing, and yet its meaning runs up through all the ascending scale of human character. A herd of brutes are satisfied with a dim, brutish pleasure if they can feed in the same field; and there is a human brutishness, an animal companionship even among men, which makes them like to be with one another, to sit in the same room, to walk in crowded streets. It is not bad; it is healthy; but it is not high. It is the companionship which is craved by the most superficial men, and by the most superficial part of all of us. Next higher than that, companionship means identity of work and occupation. To be with another man means to engage in the same tasks. This is the companionship of business men, of men of the same profession, when there is nothing more personal behind their professional relation. Next higher still is the companionship of opinion, when men think alike and so are thrown into the advocacy of the same measures and policies. This is the essence of all partisanship, the association of men about a common thought, however different may be their reasons and their ways of thinking it. Beyond all these lies the highest companionship, which is companionship of character, a sympathy in the final purposes of life, a resemblance in fundamental qualities, which is so essential that it may even do without the others, and may exist between those who are far apart in place, whose works are wholly different, and who hold very different opinions. These are the grades of human companionship: physical nearness, common employment, similar opinions, sympathy of character. According as the man mounts from

the lowest to the highest, to be with any fellow-man comes to signify to him successively one after another of these things.

We have a fine illustration of the desire for this last and highest sort of companionship in the famous words which St. Paul said to the governor, Agrippa, when he was on his trial before him. From the beginning of the interview we can see that Paul was attracted to Agrippa. Something about the manner of the magistrate pleased his prisoner. At last Paul is led on to express his feeling. "I would," he says, "that thou and all who hear me were altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Those words seem to be the echo of his Master's: "I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." Paul wanted Agrippa. From the dignity of his prisoner's stand, he yearned over that poor dissolute who was seated upon the throne. "I want you," he said; "I want you to be with me; with me not in place, not in these bonds, — I do not ask for that. Not in my work. Your work is different. I am a missionary and you are a king. More in opinions, though not principally in those, I want you to be with me. I want your companionship in character, and in the purposes of life." That was Paul's wish for his poor, kingly hearer. He himself was delighting in Christ. Truths which had made him another man, hopes that filled all his life with joy, a communion with God, rich, deep, and drowning every sorrow and provocation in its calm and mighty depths, a strength against temptation that filled him with hourly peace, — all these he had. In these he lived, and when he saw Agrippa living outside of all of them, he said, "I wish that you were living here with

me." He added, for fear that they might misunderstand him, holding out his manacled hands, "not in these chains." But for himself the chains would not have occurred to him. It was not in them that he lived. He lived in the obedience and the communion and the peace of God. There was where he wanted Agrippa to come and be with him.

And this must always be the first joy of any really good life, its first joy and its first anxiety at once, — the desire that others should enter into it. Indeed, here is the test of a man's life. Can you say, "I wish you were like me"? Can you take your purposes and standards of living, and quietly, deliberately wish for all those who are dearest to you that they should be their purposes and standards too? If you are a true Christian you can. If you are trying to serve Christ, however imperfect be your service, still you can say to your child, your friend, "I wish that you were with me where I am, on this good road of serving Christ, though far beyond me in it." But I am afraid that there are people here to-day whose lives could not begin to stand that test. I am afraid there are fathers and mothers here whose first and strongest prayer for their children would be that they might be saved from being what their parents are. You shut your characters away. With awkward hands you bring out virtues which you will not practise yourself, and put them before your children and say, "These are good. I advise you to practise these;" but your own frivolity, your scepticism, your lust, the meanness that the years have brought you, the self-indulgence and the ignorance into which your life has fallen, these places where you live yourself, you do not want to have your children with you

there, and so you never say anything of those places where you are most at home, and steal away to them when you think your children's pure eyes are not upon you. Oh, what a condemnation of a man's life is that It is not good for a man to be living any life which he would not desire to see made perfect and universal through the world. Paul says, "Be what I am;" but Dives cries out of the fire where he lies, "Oh, send and warn my seven brethren lest they come where I am!" The dying Christian tells those beside him of the blessedness of serving Christ. The dying murderer with his last breath warns men from the scaffold not to be what he has been. Oh, test your lives thus! Do not consent to be anything which you would not ask the soul that is dearest to you to be. Be nothing which you would not wish all the world to be!

Thus, then, we understand Christ's longing for the companionship of His disciples. He wanted them to be with Him. That wish of His must have run through all the scale of companionship which we have traced; but it must have completed itself in the desire that they should be like Him, that they should have His character, that in the obedience and communion of God, where He abode, they should abide with Him. I do not think that we can tell how much it signifies, this wish of Jesus, in its lower meaning of physical companionship. I am sure it does mean something. I am sure that in the Bible something is promised, some close, perpetual association of the souls of Christ's redeemed to Him, which, over and above the likeness which is to come between their souls and His, shall correspond in some celestial way to that close, visible tangible propinquity with which they

sat by one another at the table in the upper chamber. The "seeing His face," the "walking with Him in white," in heaven, are not wholly figures. What they mean those know to-day who through the lapsing years have gone from us, one by one, to be with Christ. But yet God's guidance I doubt not it is which more and more in these days has drawn the minds of Christians to think of heaven less as a place than as a character. Certainly one of the strongest characteristics of our time has been a sensible diminishing of the attempt to realize the blessedness of the occupations and the beauty of the landscapes of the other life, and an increase of the conviction that the essence of its happiness must be in holiness, and that the soul consecrated to holiness might well forget even to ask where it was to dwell and what it was to do forever. What "place" may mean in that other life we cannot even conjecture till we know something of the nature of the spiritual body in which we are to live; and, paint the place as definitely and as brilliantly as we will, still it would make it earth, not heaven, if it should be conceived of apart from spiritual fitnesses, as gratifying or satisfying the soul of its inhabitant. "Cœlum patria, Christus via," says the old motto: "Heaven the country, Christ the way." But it is true that He who is the way is also the life into which the way leads; and Christ must be country as well as path. Much of the corruption of religion, the foul, bad lives into which men have fallen, while all the time they thought that they were living most religiously, have come just here. Men have thought that they could be with Christ without being in Christ; that they could have His blessings and not share His character. Christ himself pictured the arrival of the de-

laded company at the gates of their misimagined heaven. "Master," they said, "we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets." And then He answered them, "I never knew you. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." Oh, my dear friends, let us beware of such delusion. Let us watch and guard against it. When is our Master's prayer fulfilled for us? When are we with Jesus where He is? Not when we say His name most loudly. Not when we crowd into the very centre of His church. Not when we come, if such a thing be possible, to some supernal region where with new sort of visibility He walks among a people who see Him in the new as men once saw Him in the old Jerusalem. Never, never are we with Christ till we are like Him. Not till He is formed in us do we enter truly into Him.

But let us look a little at the next clause of this verse of ours. It will carry out and make more forcible, I think, the thoughts on which we have been dwelling. Jesus says, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." That is what He wants them to be with Him for: "that they may behold my glory." Perhaps it sounds to us a little strange at first. The words almost suggest the vulgar craving for display and admiration which is familiar enough to us among our ordinary fellow-men. The school-boy wants his school-fellow to come home with him that he may see the state in which his father lives. The American says to the foreigner, "Come, see our land, its vastness, its resources, its progress." The Christian says, "Come to my church. You shall see how elaborately and tastefully we pray; you

shall hear our music; you shall admire our piety." And then comes the prayer of Jesus, "Father, I want them to be with me, that they may see my glory." Before the words can be cut entirely free from low associations and soar into the high, pure meaning which belongs to them, we must remember what Christ's glory is which He wants us to see. Its essence, the heart and soul of it, must be His goodness. Again, what outward splendor may clothe Christ eternally we cannot know, in our deep ignorance of the very conditions of life in the spiritual world where He abides. But this we are sure of, that in at its very centre and heart the glory of God must issue from and consist in the goodness of God, not in His power. It is the very purpose of religion, it is the battle that Christianity has been fighting with the standards of the world for all these centuries, to make men know that power without goodness is not really glorious. And we must not apply to God a standard from which we are always trying to disenchant ourselves as concerns our fellow-men. In Him, too, nothing but goodness can be really glorious in the eyes of moral creatures. His power is the emphasis set upon His goodness; the brilliant light thrown through the perfect window, showing the window's glory, not its own. Other creations which are not moral, the brutes and the inanimate universe, may praise the glory of mere power. It is the prerogative of our morality that only in a moral character can it discover the glory that shall call out its fullest adoration. It is Christ's goodness, then, that He would have His people see. Think for a moment of what prospects that wish of our Lord opens. That we may see His goodness perfectly! Nowadays men are telling one an-

other how tired they are of seeing sin on every side of them, — unrighteousness, impurity, corruption. "You cannot open your eyes," they say, "but one or the other of these things is staring you horribly in the face." We cheat ourselves if we think that it is peculiar to our times, for it has always been so. We cheat ourselves if we think that it is universal, for there is goodness, bright and glorious goodness, around us, mixed with the sin on every side. But yet there is unrighteousness enough to make our hearts sad and weary. I pity from my heart the man who, in the midst of the corruption all about him, has it not in his power to turn, and, for refreshment and relief, look at the goodness of Jesus Christ. There stands what we have searched for in vain. It rests and renews our failing courage, it makes us men again, with hope for humanity, when we turn and see His goodness. But how imperfectly we see it! How much goodness there must be in Him which we do not see! For here this truth comes in, that in these moral things only the like can see its like; only the good can really discern, appreciate, and understand goodness. That needs no proof. We see it every day. Men live alongside of the best saints the world possesses, do business with them, pass their whole lives with them, and never know that they are good. If we have ever made any advance in purity and unselfishness, has not the best of all its satisfaction been in this, that it has let us see something new of the self-sacrifice and purity in other men which had been hidden from us. The higher we climb, the more the peaks open around us. Now apply all this to the Saviour's prayer that we may see His glory. His glory is His goodness. Only by growth in goodness can

His goodness open itself to us. What is He praying for then? Is it not that which we traced before in the first part of His prayer, the same exactly, that we might be like Him? So only can we see Him. It is His glory that He wants us to see, but, back of that, He wants us to be such men and women that we can see His glory.

I think of Jesus as He walked through Jerusalem. Men passed Him by; some never looked at Him; others just looked at Him, and sneered, and went their way. Do you think that did not give Him pain? Surely it did. It stung Him deep with sorrow, that men would not understand Him. They could not see His glory. But was His pain for Himself? Was it that His glory needed their recognition? Was it not for them? Was it not that He saw them incapable of apprehending Him? Was it not over their low perceptions, their earthliness, their love of what was bad, their hate of what was good, that He lamented? Was not this what He was really mourning for when He sat on the Mount of Olives, and looked down upon Jerusalem? Not for Himself, but for the city which had rejected Him. Not, "Woe is me! woe is me!" but, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

Sometimes, my friends, in very far off way, it is given to a man to echo this experience of Jesus. Sometimes a man is pure, honest, just, living for the good of other people, and other people will not see it. He knows himself; he is sure that no base motive mingles with the acts he does. But men fail to understand him, and he is left to sit upon the mountain and look down in sorrow upon the city which he longs to save. At such a time a man wants, and often enough he fails to get, the spirit of Christ's prayer. He wants men to "see His

glory," and they will not. Is it for himself or for them that he is disappointed? Is it his dishonor or their blindness that stings him? The man whom you helped yesterday and who ungratefully slanders you to-day, are you indignant about yourself or pitiful over him? The man who is going up and down the town telling slanders about you, what is the feeling with which you upbraid his misrepresentation? It is hard to keep out pride and jealousy, but if we ever find ourselves where anything like Christ's experience comes home to us, let us remember how He wanted men to see Him because it was so wretched for them, not for Him, that they should be blind to Him; in simple, manly honesty, let us try to make men see what we are doing, not because we are provoked at being misunderstood, but because it is not good for them not to be capable of seeing.

I think then that we have reached the meaning of this prayer of Jesus; and we are struck immediately by seeing how it really is identical with all His prayers for men. In various words, under various figures, Christ is the intercessor, always offering prayers for men, but all His prayers resolve themselves into the same wish, all are asking for the one same thing. It is always that men might be saved from sin, that His goodness might come to us and we might be good. There is something very impressive, I think, about this, as it becomes more and more plain to us. I hear God at work everywhere on the lives of men. Wherever I go I hear men answering to some touch of His. They may not know that it is His touch which they are answering; but one who believes in Him knows that these things about us are not all doing themselves, but He does them. I pass one

man's door and laughter comes ringing out. God is sending joy into that house. I pass another, and I hear the sound of smothered sobs. God has sent pain, perhaps has sent death, there. One man is struggling with doubts which God has sent him. Another man is walking in the brightness of unclouded faith. Has God a hundred purposes for all these men? Our truth to-day is that He has but one purpose for them all. He is trying to make these men true and holy. He is doing this for all of them, and He is doing nothing else save as a means to this for any of them. Men stumble so before they get hold of that truth. They complain that God does not do this and that and the other thing for them, which He never undertook to do. They say, "He does not make me rich. He does not fill my life with friendships." So they flutter about with their complainings as a bird will sweep this way and that, doubtful and wandering and tempted on every side. But as at last the bird catches sight of the home where it belongs, though very far away, and all its flutterings cease, and setting itself straight towards that, it steadies itself and seeks it without a single turn aside; so by and by one of these wanderers among many hopes discovers far away the hope, the one only hope, for which God made him, and forgetting everything else thenceforth gives himself to that, to serve God and by serving Him to grow into His goodness.

This was the prayer of Jesus, His only prayer, remember! He asked His Father simply for this, that those whom He loved might come to Him in spiritual likeness. We use still, in our religious talk, the words which express what Christ desired, but too often they have acquired some small meaning and degenerated into cant,

and lost the largeness and purity of meaning with which Jesus used them. We talk about a worldly man being "far from Christ." Men mean by that too often something technical, something narrow; the not having undertaken certain ceremonies, or passed through certain experiences. But how much the words really mean. What a terrible thing it is to be really "far from Christ." To be far from purity is to be impure. To be far from spirituality is to be sensual. To go away from the light is to go into the outer darkness. Not to be "with Him where He is," is to be away from Him where He is not, where sin is and the misery that belongs with sin. And then that other phrase, which we use so often: "Coming nearer and nearer to Christ," we say; that does not mean creeping into a refuge where we can be safe. It means becoming better and better men; repeating His character more and more in ours. The only true danger is sin, and so the only true safety is holiness. What a sublime ambition! How it takes our vague, half-felt wishes and fills them with reality and strength, when the moral growth, which makes a man complete, is put before us, not abstractly, but in this picture of the dearest and noblest being that our souls can dream of, standing before us and saying to us, "Come unto me;" standing over us and praying for us, "Father, bring them where I am."

That was Christ's prayer. He prayed it at the Passover table. The next day He prayed it in all the silent appeal of His suffering upon the Cross. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The cross was Christ's supreme utterance of His longing that all men might be rescued out of sin and brought to holiness. As we stand

and see Him suffer, one thought, one cry alone arises in our hearts. Oh, how He must have wanted to save us! How terrible sin must have seemed to Him! How glorious holiness must have seemed, that such a prayer as this sacrifice of Himself should thus have gone up to God for our salvation!

Here let me close. It certainly would make it harder for us to do wrong this coming week, easier to do what is right, harder to be selfish, easier to be Christ-like, if this week we could constantly hear Christ praying for us that we might be with Him where He is. That prayer would draw us to Him, into His life, into His character, and make this week a foretaste of that eternity whose promised glory is that there we are to be "forever with the Lord."

XVIII.

THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE.

"Brethren, the time is short." — 1 Cor. vii. 29.

The tone in which a man speaks often helps us to understand his meaning quite as much as the actual words he says. And with a great and sincere writer there is a tone in writing as well as in speaking, something which gives an intonation to the words he writes, and lets us understand in which of several possible spirits he has written them. "Brethren, the time is short," writes St. Paul to the Corinthians, and there is no tremor of dismay or sadness in his voice. He was in the midst of work, full of the interest and joy of living, holding the reins of many complicated labors in his hands, and he quietly said, "This is not going to last long. Very soon it will be over." It is what men often say to themselves with terror, clutching the things which they hold all the more closely, as if they would hold on to them forever. There is nothing of that about St. Paul. And on the other hand, there is nothing of morbidness or discontent, no rejoicing that the time is short, and wishing that it was still shorter. There is no hatred of life which makes him want to be away. There is no mad impatience for the things which lie beyond. There is simply a calm and satisfied recognition of a fact. There is a reasonable sense of what is good and dear in

life, and yet, at the same time, of what must lie beyond life, of what life cannot give us. It is as when the same pen wrote those sublime and simple words, "This corruptible must put on incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality;" the quiet statement of a great, eternal necessity, at which the wise man must feel the same kind of serious joy as that with which he follows the movements of the stars, and looks to see day and night inevitably give place to one another. Or it is like that calm, majestic weighing of two worlds over against each other, and letting his will lie in even balance between them, cordially waiting the will of God, with which the same Paul wrote again, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you: and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide." Or, again, it is like the healthy satisfaction of the healthy boy in his boyhood, knowing all the time the manhood that awaits him, feeling his boyhood pressed upon by it, hoping for it and expecting it, but living now in the concentrated happiness and work of the years whose activity and pleasure is all the more intense because of the sense that it must end.

It does not matter what St. Paul was thinking of when he said the time was short. He may have had his mind upon the death which they were all approaching. He may have thought of the coming of Christ, which he seems to have expected to take place while he was yet alive. I do not think we can be certain which it was. And perhaps the very vagueness about this helps us to his meaning. For he is not, evidently, dwelling upon the nature of the event which is to limit the "time," only

upon the simple fact that there is a limit; that the period of earthly life and work lies like an island in the midst of a greater sea of being, the island of time in the ocean of a timeless eternity; and that it is pressed upon and crowded into littleness by the infinite. Not the shore where the sea sets the island its limits, but only the island in the sea, hearing the sea always on its shores: not the experience by which this life should pass into another, but only the compression and intensifying of this life by the certainty that there is another; not death, but the shortness of life — that is what his thoughts are fixed upon, and it is this of which the best men always think the most.

Our theme is this, then — the shortness of human life. How old that theme is, how trite, and oftentimes how dreary. As we look back and listen we hear all the generations wearisomely wasting their little span of life in doleful lamentations that it is not longer. Trite lessons which nobody loves to learn; dull poems which no man can sing; efforts at resignation which do not succeed, — these are what come flocking up about the truth that life is short. It is the ghost at the banquet of human thought. It is the monotonous, miserable undertone that haunts all the bustle and clatter of men's work and all the gay music of their pleasure-making. I wish that I could read its truth to you in another tone and paint its picture in another color. I wish that I could make you hear it, as it seems as if Paul's Corinthians must have heard it, almost like a trumpet, — a call to work and joy. If we can catch his spirit at all, something of that may certainly be possible.

And first, then, let us ask, What is the shortness of

life? What do we mean by life's being short? There is a little insect that crawls upon the trees, and creeps, in one short day of ours, through all the experiences of life from birth to death. In a short twenty-four hours his life begins, matures, and ends, — birth, youth, activity, age, decrepitude, all crowded and compressed into these moments that slip away uncounted in one day of our human life. Is his life long or short? Is our life long or short to him? If he could realize it by any struggle of his insect brain, what an eternity our threescore years and ten must seem to him! And then lift up your eyes, lift up your thoughts, and think of God. What look has any life that has any limits to Him? Nothing short of eternity can seem long to Him. He sees the infant's life flash like a ripple into the sunlight of existence and vanish almost before the eye has caught it. And He sees Methuselah's slow existence creep through its nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and find, at last, the grave which had stood waiting so long. Is there a real difference in the length of these two lives to Him? A little longer ripple is the life of the patriarch than was the life of the baby, that is all. And what do we mean then by the shortness of our human life? To the ephemera it looks like an eternity; to God it looks like an instant. Evidently these attributes of length and shortness must be relative; they are not absolute. How shall human life seem then to man? Must it not depend altogether upon where he stands to look at it? If he stands with the ephemera, his life looks long to him. If he stands with God, his life looks short to him. If a man is able, that is, to conceive of immortality; if he can picture to himself a being who can live forever; if he

recognizes in himself any powers which can outlast and laugh at death, — then any limit of life must seem narrow; against the broad background of the whole, any part must seem small. On the blue sky the almost million miles of the sun's breadth seem narrow. It is here that the truth about the matter lies. It is only by the dim sense of his immortality, only by the divine sight of himself as a being capable of long, long life, that man thinks his life on earth is short. Only by losing that divine sight of himself, and looking at himself as the beasts look at themselves, can he come to think his life long. The beast's life never seems short to him. Think of yourself as a beast and your life will never seem short to you. It is the divine consciousness in man, the consciousness that he is a child of God, that makes him know he is short-lived. Human life is not long or short, absolutely. It seems short to us because the consciousness of immortality is in us. What then? It could not seem long unless we threw that consciousness away. That we can count it short, then, is the pledge and witness of our nobility. The man who died among us yesterday, oh, realize, my friends, that the very fact that his life could seem to you, as you stood by his coffin, to have been very short, is a sign that you have been able to conceive of his humanity and yours being immortal. Feel this, and is not the shortness of life the crown and glory of our race?

And again, we all know how the shortness of life is bound up with its fullness. It is to him who is most active, always thinking, feeling, working, caring for people and for things, that life seems short. Strip a life empty and it will seem long enough. The day crawls to the

dler, and flies to the busy worker. That is the common place of living. The shortness of life is closely associated, not merely with the great hopes of the future, but with the real vitality of the present. What then? If you and I complain how short life is, how quick it flies through the grasp with which we try to hold it, we are complaining of that which is the necessary consequence of our vitality. You can make life long only by making it slow; and if you want to make it slow I should think that there were men enough in town who could tell you how; men with idle hands and brains, who seem to have so much trouble to get through life as it is that we cannot imagine that they really wish that there were more of it.

And tell me, then, does not the shortness of life cease to be our sorrow and lamentation; does it not become our crown and privilege and glory, when we see that life is short to us because we are, that life is short to us just in proportion as we are, conscious of immortality and full of vitality? Who would not dread to have his life begin to seem long? Who would not feel that he was losing the proof-marks of his best humanity, forgetting that he was immortal and ceasing to be thoroughly alive?

But let us leave this and go further on. Suppose a man, with more or less of struggle, with what grace he can, has accepted the shortness of life as a conviction. He knows it. It has been forced upon him by some special shock, or it has been pressed into him by his gradual experience, the certainty that life is short, that he is not to be, cannot be, a long time here on the earth. What effect will that conviction have upon his life? What effect ought it to have? Evidently it ought to go deeper

than his spirits. It ought to do something more than make him glad or sorry. It ought to have some effect upon his conduct and his character. I should like to suggest to you in several particulars what it seems to me that that effect will be.

1. And first of all must it not make a man try to sift the things that offer themselves to him, and try to find out what his things are? The indiscriminateness of most men's lives impresses us, I think, more and more. The old Greek Epictetus said that for each of men there is one great classification of the universe, into the things which concern him and the things which do not concern him. To how many men that classification is all vague. Many men's souls are like omnibuses, stopping to take up every interest or task that holds up its finger and beckons them from the sidewalk. So many men are satisfied with asking themselves vague questions about whether this thing or that thing is wrong, as if whatever they could not pronounce to be absolutely wrong for every man to do was right for them to do. So many men seem to think it enough that they should see no good reason for not doing a thing, in order to justify their doing it. As if the absence of any reason why they should do it were not reason enough why they should not do it. Such indiscriminateness would be inevitable, you could not hope to control it, if life were indefinitely long. Such indiscriminateness is almost legitimate and necessary in childhood, in the beginning, the freshman year of life. Then life seems endless. Then the quick experimenting senses are ready for whatever strikes them. But as the course goes on, as its limit comes in sight and we see how short it is, the elective system must come in. Out of the

mass of things which we have touched, we must choose these which are ours, — the books which we shall read, the men whom we shall know, the power that we shall wield, the pleasure which we shall enjoy, the special point where we shall drop our bit of usefulness into the world's life before we go. We come to be like a party of travellers left at a great city railway station for a couple of hours. All cannot see everything in town. Each has to choose according to his tastes what he will see. They separate into their individualities instead of going wandering about promiscuously, as they would if there were no limit to their time. So conscientiousness, self-knowledge, independence, and the toleration of other men's freedom which always goes with the most serious and deep assertion of our own freedom are closely connected with the sense that life is very short.

2. But again, besides this discrimination of the things with which we ought to deal, the sense of the shortness of life also brings a power of freedom in dealing with the things which we do take to be our own. This, I think, is what St. Paul is speaking of in the words which are in close connection with this text of ours. "Brethren, the time is short," he says; "it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." Not that they should not marry, or weep, or rejoice, or buy, or use the world. The shortness of life was not to paralyze life like that. But they were to do these things as if they did them not. They were to do them with a

soul above their details, and in the principles, reasons, and motives which lay beyond them. To take once more the illustration of the travellers: he who has only an hour to stay in some great foreign city will not puzzle and burden himself with all the intricacies of its streets or all the small particulars of its life. He will try, if he is wise, simply to catch its general spirit, to see what sort of town it is and learn its lessons. He must tread its pavements, ride in its carriages, talk with its people; but he will not do these things as the citizens do them; he will not be fastidious about them; he will hold them very loosely, only trying to make each of them give him what help it can towards the understanding of the city. He will do them as if he did them not. Is not that the idea? Just so he who knows he is in the world for a very little while, who knows it and feels it, is not like a man who is to live here forever. He strikes for the centre of living. He cares for the principles and not for the forms of life. He does the little daily things of life, but he does them for their purposes, not for themselves. He is like a climber on a rocky pathway, who sets his foot upon each projecting point of stone, but who treads on each, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the ones above it. The man who knows he is to die to-morrow does all the acts of to-day, but does them as if he did not do them, does them freely, cannot be a slave to their details, has entered already into something of the large liberty of death. That is the way in which the sense that life is short liberates a man from the slavery of details. You say, perhaps, "That is not good. No man can do his work well unless his heart is in it." But is it not also true that a man's heart can really be only in the

heart of his work, and that the most conscientious faithfulness in details will always belong to the man, not who serves the details, but who serves the idea of the work which he has to do? He who holds that the "fashion of this world passeth away" will live in the fashion still as a present means of working, but will get a great deal more out of it, because he holds it a great deal more loosely than the man who treats it as if it were to last forever. Through the freer use of the fashion which passeth away he will come to the substance which cannot pass away,—the love of God, the life and character of man.

3. Closely connected with this is another idea, which is that in the shortness of life the great emotions and experiences by which the human character is ruled and shaped assume their largest power and act with their most ennobling influence. Every emotion which a man can feel, every experience which a man can undergo, has its little form and its great form. Happiness is either a satisfaction that the cushions are soft and the skies clear, or a sublime content in harmony with the good universe of God. Love is either a whim of the eyes, or a devotion and consecration of the soul. Self-confidence is either a petty pride in our own narrowness, or a realization of our duty and privilege as one of God's children. Hope is either a petty wilfulness, or a deep and thoughtful insight. Trust is either laziness or love. Fear is either a fright of the nerves, or the solemn sense of the continuousness and necessary responsibility of life. And grief is either the wrench of a broken habit, or the agony of a wrung soul. So every emotion has its higher and its lower forms. It means but little to me if I know only that a man is happy or unhappy, if I do not know

of what sort his joy or sorrow is. But all the emotions are certainly tempted to larger action if it is realized that the world in which they take their birth is but for a little time, that its fashion passes away, that the circumstances of an experience are very transitory. That must drive me down into the essence of every experience and make me realize it in the profoundest and the largest way. Take, for instance, one experience. Think of deep sorrow coming to a man, something which breaks his home and heart by taking suddenly, or slowly, out of them that which is the centre of them both, some life around which all his life has lived. There are two forms in which the sorrow of that death comes to a man. One is in the change of circumstances, the breaking up of sweet companionships and pleasant habits, the loneliness and weariness of living; the other is in the solemn brooding of mystery over the soul and the tumult of love within the soul, the mystery of death, the distress of love. Now if the man who is bereaved sees nothing in the distance, as he looks forward, but one stretch of living, if he realizes most how long life is, it is the first of these aspects of his sorrow that is the most real to him. He multiplies the circumstances of his bereavement into all these coming years. Year after year, year after year, he is to live alone. But if, as it so often happens when death comes very near to us, life seems a very little thing; if, when we stand to watch the spirit which has gone away from earth to heaven, the years of earth which we have yet to live seem very few and short; if it seems but a very little time before we shall go, too, then our grief is exalted to its largest form. It grows unselfish. It is perfectly consistent with a triumphant thankfulness for

the dear soul that has entered into rest and glory. It dwells not on the circumstances of bereavement, but upon that mysterious strain in which love has been stretched from this world to the other, and, amid all the pain that the tension brings, is still aware of joy at the new knowledge of its own capacities which has been given it. Ah, you must all know, you must all have seen, that men's griefs are as different as men's lives are. To the man who is all wrapt up in this world, grief comes as the ghosts come to the poor narrow-minded churl, — to plague and tease him, to disturb the circumstances and habits of his living, to pull down his fences and make strange, frightful noises in his quiet rooms. All is petty. To him to whom life is but an episode, a short stage in the existence of eternity, who is always cognizant of the great surrounding world of mystery, grief comes as angels came to the tent of Abraham. Laughter is hushed before them. The mere frolic of life stands still, but the soul takes the grief in as a guest, meets it at the door, kisses its hand, washes its travel-stained feet, spreads its table with the best food, gives it the seat by the fireside, and listens reverently for what it has to say about the God from whom it came. So different are the sorrows that come to two men which seem just the same. So is every emotion great or little, according to the life in which it finds its play. It must find earth too small for it, and open eternity to itself, or it spreads itself out thin and grows petty. I beg you, if God sends you grief, to take it largely by letting it first of all show you how short life is, and then prophesy eternity. Such is the grief of which the poet sings so nobly, —

"Grief should be
Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate;
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free;
Strong to consume small troubles; to commend
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end."

But grief, to be all that, must see the end; must bring and forever keep with its pain such a sense of the shortness of life that the pain shall seem but a temporary accident, and that all that is to stay forever after the pain has ceased, the exaltation, the unselfishness, the mystery, the nearness to God, shall seem to be the substance of the sorrow.

4. But let me hasten on and name another power which seems to be bound up with the perception of the shortness of life. I mean the criticalness of life. All men who have believed at all that there was another life, have held in some way that this life was critical. Some have held absolutely that probation wholly stopped when this life ended, and that as the man was when he died, so he was certainly to be forever and ever. Others have only felt that such a change as death involves must have some mighty power to fasten character, and so to fasten destiny, and that the soul, living in any unknown world, must carry forever, deep in its nature and its fortunes, the marks and consequences of what it has been here. That thought of criticalness belongs to every limited period of being which opens into something greater. A boy feels the probation character of his youth, feels that he is making manhood, just in proportion as he vividly realizes the approach of his majority. And man is made so that some sense of criticalness is necessary to the most vigorous and best life always. Let me feel that nothing but this moment depends upon this moment's action, and

I am very apt to let this moment act pretty much as it will. Let me see the spirits of the moments yet unborn standing and watching it anxiously, and must watch it also for their sakes. And it is in this general sense of probation, or of criticalness, this sense that no moment liveth or dieth to itself; it is in this, not stated as a doctrine, but spread out as a great pervading consciousness all through life, it is in this that the strongest moral power of life is found. Now ask yourself: Could this have been if life had been so long, if life had seemed so long to men, as never to suggest its limits? It is when the brook begins to hear the great river calling it, and knows that its time is short, that it begins to hurry over the rocks and toss its foam into the air and make straight for the valley. Life that never thinks of its end lives in a present and loses the flow and movement of responsibility. It is not so much that the shortness of life makes us prepare for death, as it is that it spreads the feeling of criticalness all through life, and makes each moment prepare for the next, makes life prepare for life. This is its power. Blessed is he who feels it. Blessed is he in whose experience each day and each hour has all the happiness and all the solemnity of a parent towards the day and the hour to which it gives birth, stands sponsor for it, holds it for baptism at the font of God. Such days are sacred in each other's eyes. The life in which such days succeed each other is a holy family with its moments "bound each to each by natural piety."

5. I take one moment only to suggest one more consequence which comes from the sense of how short life is I mean the feeling that it gives us towards our fellowmen. Do you not know that when your time of inter-

course is short with any man, your relations with that man grow true and deep? Two men who have lived side by side for years, with business and social life between them, with a multitude of suspicions and concealments, let them know that they have only an hour more to live together, and, as they look into each other's eyes, do not the suspicions and concealments clear away? They know each other. They trust each other. They think the best of each other. They are ready to do all that they can do for each other in those few moments that remain. Oh, my dear friends, you who are letting miserable misunderstandings run on from year to year, meaning to clear them up some day; you who are keeping wretched quarrels alive because you cannot quite make up your mind that now is the day to sacrifice your pride and kill them; you who are passing men sullenly upon the street, not speaking to them out of some silly spite, and yet knowing that it would fill you with shame and remorse if you heard that one of those men were dead tomorrow morning; you who are letting your neighbor starve, till you hear that he is dying of starvation; or letting your friend's heart ache for a word of appreciation or sympathy, which you mean to give him some day, — if you only could know and see and feel, all of a sudden, that "the time is short," how it would break the spell! How you would go instantly and do the thing which you might never have another chance to do. What a day of friendliness, of brotherliness, of reconciliations, of help, the last day of the world will be, if men shall know how near the awful end is! But need we wait for that? Cannot the men and women whom we live with now be sacred to us by the knowledge of what wonderful, mysterious ground it

is that we are walking together, here in this narrow human life, close on the borders of eternity?

"Brethren, the time is short." There is the fact, then, forever pressing on us, and these are the consequences which it ought to bring to those who feel its pressure. Behold, it is no dreary shadow hanging above our heads and shutting out the sunshine. It is an everlasting inspiration. It makes a man know himself and his career. It makes him put his heart into the heart of the career which he knows to be his. It makes the emotions and experiences of life great and not petty to him. It makes life solemn and interesting with criticalness; and it makes friendship magnanimous, and the desire to help our fellow-men real and energetic. It concentrates and invigorates our lives. In the brightest, freshest, clearest mornings, it comes to us not as a cloud, not as a paralysis, but as a new brightness in the sunshine and a new vigor in the arm. "Brethren, the time is short." Only remember the shortness of life is not a reality to us, except as it shows itself against a true realization of eternity. Life is long to any man, however he mourns over its shortness, to whom life is a whole. Life as a part, life set upon the background of eternity, life recognized as the temporary form of that whose substance is everlasting, that is short; we wait for, we expect its end. And remember that to the Christian the interpretation of all this is in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." The earthly life set against the eternal life, the incorporate earthly form uttering here for a time the everlasting and essential being, those years shut in out of the eternities between the birth and the ascension, that resurrection

opening the prospect of the life that never was to end, — these are the never-failing interpretation to the man who believes in them of the temporal and eternal in his own experience. Christ comes and puts His essential life into our human form. In that form He claims the truest brotherhood with us. He shares our lot. He binds His life with ours so that they never can be separated. What He is we must be; what we are He must be forever. Finally, by the cross of love, He, entering into our death, takes us completely into His life. And when He had done all this He rose. Out of His tomb, standing there among human tombs, He comes, and lo, before Him there rolls on the unbroken endlessness of Being. And not before Him alone, — before those also whom He had taken so completely to Himself. His resurrection makes our resurrection sure. Our earthly life, like His, becomes an episode, a short, special, temporary thing, when it is seen like His against an immortality.

So the Incarnation is the perpetual interpretation of our life. Jesus cries, "It is finished," on His cross, and at once it is evident that that finishing is but a beginning; that it is a breaking to pieces of the temporal, that it may be lost in the eternal! That cross is the perpetual glorification of the shortness of life. In its light we, too, can stand by the departing form of our own life, or of some brother's life, and say, "It is finished," and know that the finishing is really a beginning. The temporary is melting away like a cloud in the sky, that the great total sky may all be seen. The form in which the man has lived is decaying, that the real life of the man may be apparent. The fashion of this world is passing away: the episode, the accident of earth is over, that the spirit

ual reality may be clear. It is in the light of the cross that the exquisite picture of Shelley, who tried so hard to be heathen and would still be Christian in his own despite, is really realized, —

> "The one remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines; earth's shadows fly;
> Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity,
> Until death tramples it to fragments.

And so what is there to be done? What could be clearer? Only to him who realizes eternity does the short human life really seem short and give out of its shortness its true solemnity and blessing. It is only by binding myself to eternity that I can know the shortness of time. But how shall I bind myself to eternity except by giving myself to Him who is eternal in obedient love? Obedient love! Loving obedience! That is what binds the soul of the less to the soul of the greater everywhere. I give myself to the eternal Christ, and in His eternity I find my own. In His service I am bound to Him, and the shortness of that life, whose limitations in any way shut me out from Him, becomes an inspiration, not a burden to me. Oh, my dear friends, you who with Christian faith have seen a Christian die, tell me was not this short life then revealed to you in all its beauty? Did you not see completely that no life was too long which Christ had filled with the gift and knowledge of Himself; no life was too short which departed from the earth only to go and be with Him in Heaven forever?

My dear friends, let us think how solemn, how beautiful, the thought of dedication to Christ becomes, when through His voice which calls us sounds the warning

and inspiring cry of His disciple, "Brethren, the time is short." There is no time to waste of what belongs entirely to Him. "The time is short." Take your place now. Bind yourself now in with the fortunes of those who are trying to serve Him. This Christian Church which we see here is only the beginning. This poor stained, feeble church of earth is only the germ and promise of the great Church of Heaven, and we who are trying to serve Him together now have a right to take courage from the promise of the Master, who has overcome, "Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and He shall go no more out.'

XIX.

HUMILITY.

"And be clothed with humility." — 1 Peter v. 5.

We are thinking, during Lent, about the duty of being humble. But what a poor thing we make out of humility. What a fiction it is apt to be with us. How artificial we are apt to make it. We reduce it to a few observances. We try to cultivate it from outside. At most we try to school ourselves into certan feelings, making ourselves think about certain things until we reach a certain emotional condition, and we call that humility; but humility not as an action, not as a sentiment, but as an abiding character, out of which all actions should flow in one direction, from which all sentiments should rise, cloud-like, with one color, — this we hardly conceive of, and to seek after it hardly enters into our thoughts.

Let us look, then, at humility a little while, and see if we cannot get some deeper and truer notions about what it really is, and where it really comes from. It is not well to use the word, and praise the grace, and yet be all the while mistaking what it is that we name and praise.

The word itself and its history are interesting. "There are cases," says Coleridge, "in which more knowledge, of more value, may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign." You can often trace a word down the generations and judge of the char-

acter of each period by seeing whether the word was popular or unpopular, whether it was a title of dishonor or of honor in each successive age; just as, if you could send a great warrior or a great thinker or a great saint, a Cæsar or a Bacon or a St. John, from age to age and country to country, and could see how every age and country regarded Him, you would have a test of the character of every land and time. It is true of the careers of the best words, as Jesus said it was to be of the progress of His disciples, that "he that receiveth you receiveth me." The best and noblest words are really the judges of the people, who pronounce on their own moral condition as they speak them with affection or dislike.

Now take this word humility. It was not a new word when the New Testament was written. It, or its Greek equivalent, was very common. It had been used for years. Only it is striking that almost without exception the word humility, used before the time of Christ, is used contemptuously and rebukingly. It always meant meanness of spirit. To be humble was to be a coward. It described a cringing soul. It was a word of slaves. Such is its almost constant classic use.

Where could we find a more striking instance of the change that the Christian religion brought into the world, than in the way in which it took this disagraceful word and made it honorable. To be humble is to have a low estimation of one's self. That was considered shameful in the olden time. Nobody claimed it for himself. Nobody enjoined it upon another. You insulted a man if you called him humble. It seemed to be inconsistent with that self-respect which is necessary to any good ac-

tivity. Christ came and made the despised quality the crowning grace of the culture that He inaugurated. Lo! the disgraceful word became the key-word of His fullest gospel. He redeemed the quality, and straightway the name became honorable. It became the ambition of all men to wear it. To call a man humble was to praise him now. Men affected it if they did not have it. Pride began to ape humility when humility was made the crowning grace of human life.

It is in moral changes such as these, in alterations of the standards and aspirations of the race, that the revolutionary power of Christianity is really shown, far more than in external changes, the progress of civilization, the reshaping of empires. Think what the change must have been. Think with what indignation and contempt men of the old school in Rome and Athens must have seen mean-spiritedness, as they called it, taken up, inculcated and honored, proclaimed as the salvation of the world, and Him in whom it was most signally embodied made the Saviour and King of men. Ah, it seems to me more and more that it must have been very hard for those early disciples to have believed in Christ.

But let us see, if we can, what the change was that Christianity accomplished, and how it came about. The quality that Christianity rescued and glorified was humility. Humility means a low estimate or value of one's self. But all values are relative. The estimate we set on anything depends of course on the standard with which we compare it. You cannot tell how big anything is, unless you compare it with something else, and so values are always varying as the standards or the objects with which you compare the thing that you are valuing

change. Your boy of twelve plays with his little brothers of three or four, and seems to them a giant and a sage; then he goes and sits among his teachers, and is forthwith a child again. Everything depends for its value on the standards with which you compare it. The silver is precious till you find the gold, the gold until you find the diamond.

Now Christianity's great primary revelation was God. Much about Him it showed men; but first of all it showed them Him. He, the Creator, the Governor, became a presence clear and plain before men's hearts. His greatness, His holiness, His love, — nay, we cannot describe Him by His qualities, for He is greater than them all, — He, by the marvellous method of the Incarnation, showed himself to man. He stood beside man's work. He towered above and folded Himself about man's life. He entered into men's closets and took possession of men's hearts. And what then? God in the world must be the standard of the world. Greatness meant something different when men had seen how great He was, and the manhood which had compared itself with lesser men and grown proud now had a chance to match itself with God, and to see how small it was and to grow humble about itself.

We are not dealing only with history; we are not talking only about what happened eighteen hundred years ago. A man is living a pagan life here, now, among us. Wherever he goes he meets men whom he measures himself against, and finds that he surpasses them. He is the strongest man in the wrestle of business, the quickest man at a bargain, the wittiest man at an argument. Now that man cannot be humble. He overtops his little world and

he must think himself high. The White Mountains have never seen the Alps, and Mount Washington and Mount Jefferson, looking down on their lower peaks, must think they are the summits of the world. It is strange how small men can make their world, so that the petty supremacy of a school-room or a shop counter is enough to kill out humility. Now, if such a man comes among other men better and greater than himself, he does, perhaps, learn what it is to be humble. Only our pride is very ingenious, and we are very quick to find some point in which the greatest of our superiors is worse off than we are, and to hide our imperilled self-satisfaction there. "Yes," we say, "he knows a hundred times as much, and is a hundred times as generous as I, but he has not my good taste, or he cannot coin money as I can." It is wonderful how the smallest man can keep his self-complacency in the presence of the largest. So many of us have some one pet point in which we really believe that we surpass almost every one we meet. But let that small man become a Christian. That means, let the narrow walls of his life be broken down and let him see God, present here by Christ. At once then is all changed. It is as if you took the brown rugged hill and towered up into the sky above it the white, straight, topless alpine mountain. All question of feet and inches disappears, and in the consciousness of its littleness that which had counted itself great does homage to the truly great which it has found.

This is the meaning of whatever sense of his own littleness comes into a man's life when he is made a Christian. I think it is terrible to consider what a fearful thing it would be if the only thing that Christ showed us of God were His greatness. The pure humiliation would

be too crushing. Just imagine that when you and I were going on learning our lessons, doing our work, exercising our skill here on the earth and proud of our knowledge, our strength, and our skill, just suppose that suddenly Omniscience towered up above our knowledge, and Omnipotence above our strength, and the Infinite Wisdom stood piercing out of the sight of our ignorant and baffled skill. Must it not crush the man with an utter insignificance? What is the use of heaving up these mole-hills so laboriously close by the gigantic mountain-side? But if the revelation is not only this; if it includes not only the greatness but the love of God; if the majesty that is shown to us is the majesty of a father, which takes our littleness into its greatness, makes it part of itself, honors it, trains it, does not mock it, then there comes the true graciousness of humility. It is not less humble, but it is not crushed. It is not paralyzed, but stimulated. The energy which the man used to get out of his estimate of his own greatness he gets now out of the sight of His Father's, which yet is so near to him that, in some finer and higher sense, it still is his; and so he is more hopeful and happy and eager in his humility than he ever used to be in his pride. This is the philosophy of reverence and humility as enrichers of life and main-springs of activity.

There is nothing so bad for man or woman as to live always with their inferiors. It is a truth so important that one might well wish to turn aside a moment and urge it, even in its lower aspects, upon the young people who are just making their associations and friendships. Many a temptation of laziness or pride induces us to draw towards those who do not know as much or are not

in some way as strong as we are. It is a smaller tax upon our powers to be in their society. But it is bad for us. I am sure that I have known men, intellectually and morally very strong, the whole development of whose intellectual and moral life has suffered and been dwarfed, because they have only accompanied with their inferiors, because they have not lived with men greater than themselves. Whatever else they lose, they surely must lose some culture of humility. If I could choose a young man's companions, some should be weaker than himself, that he might learn patience and charity; many should be as nearly as possible his equals, that he might have the full freedom of friendship; but most should be stronger than he was, that he might forever be thinking humbly of himself and be tempted to higher things. And this principle, which is surely the true one in the associations of men with one another, is elevated to its perfect application when we think of man humbled and incited by the constant presence of God manifest both as majesty and love in Christ.

It was not strange that humility should be contemptible as long as and where the presence of God was very little real. The only way for men to be humble then was for them to stoop until they were lower than something than which they were made to be taller. But when Christ showed us God, then man had only to stand at his highest and look up to the Infinite above him to see how small he was. And, always, the true way to be humble is not to stoop till you are smaller than yourself, but to stand at your real height against some higher nature that shall show you what the real smallness of your greatest greatness is. The first is the unreal humility

that always goes about depreciating human nature; the second is the genuine humility that always stands in love and adoration, glorifying God.

2. This is one, then, of the ways in which Christ rescued and exalted humility. He gave man his true standard. He set man's littleness against the infinite height of God. The next way that I want to speak of is even more remarkable. He asserted and magnified the essential glory of humanity. Remember, always, when you say that Christ convicted man of sin, that, nevertheless, true as that is, there never was any life that so superbly asserted the essential worth of humanity, — showed what a surpassing thing it is to be a man, — like that sin-convicting life of Jesus. He showed us that the human might be joined with the divine. He showed us that from lips of flesh like ours those mighty words, "I and my Father are one," might issue, and yet the lips not be burned up in uttering them; and more than this, He showed us that the human soul was worth all the mysterious and terrible redemption of the cross. Thus He glorified human nature. And does it seem strange then to say that by this glorification He taught man that it was his true place to be humble? Ah, if a man must be humbled, and is exalted by his humility, when he sees God, surely when he sees the possibility of himself, there is no truer or more exalted feeling for him than to look in on what he is and think it very mean and wretched by the side of what he might be, what his Lord has showed him that he was made for. Christ makes us humble by showing us our design. Again, let me suppose that I can really get close to the proud, self-sufficient master of the state, the shop, the farm. I get his ear in some lull of

his noisy work, and I tell him the story of a being whom God loves and treasures. I tell him about powers meant to grapple with eternal things. I describe to him a love that is made to love the loveliest. I open the gates of immortality and show him life opening, brightening forever and forever. I am able to touch the very breast of the Almighty, and lo! the crystal window of revelation opens and the love of God for this wonderful being burns clear within. "God so loved the world!" I tell the story of this being, and then to my good friend, absorbed in the low fret and sin and worry of this world, I say, "This is God's idea of you." I drop the curtain of his real life for a moment and let him see God's purpose! Is he not humbled? What "Thou art the man!" of any Nathan charging him with sin could make his sin seem so wretched to him as this story of himself, written in the bright letters of the Saviour's Gospel, even in the red letters of the Saviour's blood? He matches himself against himself and is ashamed. The more he thinks of what he might have been, the less he thinks of what he is. It strips his pride off from him and clothes him with humility.

There is nothing more strange and at the same time more truthful about Christianity, than its combination of humiliation and exaltation for the soul of man. If one wants to prove that man is but a little lower than the angels, the son and heir of God, he must go to the Bible. If he wants to prove how poor and base and satan-like the soul of man can be, still to the Bible he must go. If you want to find the highest ecstasy that man's spirit ever reached, it is the Christian saint exulting in his God. Do you want to hear the bitterest sorrow that ever wrung this human heart? It is that same Chris-

tian saint penitent for his sin. The same faith has built its cathedral spires that pierced the very skies with their triumphant hope, and it has hollowed the hermit's caves under the ground, as if men could not hide their sinfulness too deep out of the sight of daylight and of God. The exaltation of Christianity seems to get its supremest jubilate out of the depths from which it sprang up into the sky, and its humiliation is all the more profound both for the height from which it fell and for the height to which it may rise again. The world has known no psalms and no lamentations like the Bible's, and they are parts of the one same book.

If I am speaking directly to the experience of any thoughtful and sensitive person here to-day, I know that he will bear me witness when I say that in this great characteristic of it Christianity is true to all the deepest facts of human life. Have you not learnt, did you not learn very early, that exaltation and abasement do not stand far apart in, do not come singly into, your life? Thoughtless and coarse natures, feeling only the grosser delights and the grosser sorrows, are either all delighted or all sorrowful, and know no mixture of emotions. Either they are all triumphant or entirely discouraged. But as you went farther and came to subtler disciplines of God, have you not known what it was to see your privileges never so clearly as in the light of your imperfections, and your imperfections never so clearly as in the light of your privileges? Just when you saw some dear life pass through the gate into the immortal world, and saw what a bliss and triumph there must be for one to whom that unseen world was real and bright, just then you felt how little you had grasped it, how wedded you were to these

things that are mortal and seen. Just when you saw some glimpse of the sweetness and beauty of giving up yourself for others, you found how unwilling you were to sacrifice yourself, how full of selfishness you were. The same light which showed you the heaven that you were made for has always showed you the rock that you were chained to; as the same word of Jesus which showed the young nobleman the treasures in heaven brought back before his mind the treasures on earth from which he could not tear himself away. This makes the sacredness and awfulness of life when we come to know it, that we are never so near our highest as when we are most sensible of the danger of our lowest, and the danger of the lowest is never so real to us as when the splendor of the highest stands wide open.

I think we cannot but see the beauty of a humility like this if it once becomes the ruling power of a changed man's life, this humility born of the sight of a man's possible self. It has in it all that is good in the best self-respect. Nay, with reference to the whole subject of self-respect this seems to be true, that the only salvation from an admiration of our own present condition, which is pride, is to be found in a profound respect for the best possibility and plan of our being, which involves humility. Ask yourself. You are dealing, say, with one of the proud, successful men of whom our land is full, — a man successful in some one of the low and sordid planes of effort in which men are forever struggling. He is proud of his smartness, proud of his sharp, hard, unscrupulousness. Suppose you had, for instance, the mere successful politician of the day. The man admires himself. To him there is nothing in all the world conceivable so

fine and complete as the sort of life that he is living. That is his vulgar pride. Will you make that man humble? You may hold up before him the most shining characters the world has ever seen. Marshal the white, unstained names before him and they do not abash him. He easily counts them his inferiors. You never can abash him till in some way he becomes conscious of a purer, honester, and nobler self. Never until by some shock or other his life is broken and he sees what he might have been, sees what he might be. In some stillness of the night when a better nature is called out by God, and a man whom he recognizes as himself and yet who shames the self that lived his yesterday, stands visible before him, — then he is humbled. In some revival meeting when a picture of heaven or a picture of hell, painted with graphic earnestness, reaches him and lets him see that this soul of his which he has kept truckling for dollars or for offices is capable of heaven and capable of hell, when the dignity of his responsibility is set before him, then he is humbled.

Let us be sure that there is, laid up in the heart of God, an image and a thought of each of us, which if we could see it would shame and humble us. We go on our way, we sin and rejoice in sinning, we love low things, we starve our souls or we pollute them, we wade through mire and grovel in idleness; but all the while there lies God's thought of us, before which if we saw it we must be ashamed. The Christian pilgrims to the Jordan are baptized there sometimes in a pure white robe, which then is laid by to be used again for the purpose of their burial. They are to be wrapped in it again when they are dead. After all the sins and miseries and

vicissitudes of earth are over, they must come back at last and meet that symbol of the purity with which they started their new life. And often, with that robe laid up at home, they must stop in the midst of some foul passage of their life, and remember how white it is, and be humiliated. So it is the sight of what God meant us to be that makes us ashamed of what we are. And it is the death of Christ for us, the preciousness that He saw in our souls making them worthy of that awful sacrifice, it is that which lets us see our own soul as He sees it in its possibility, and so lets us see it in its reality as he sees it too and put our pride away and be humble.

I have spoken of the way in which Christianity sets a man humbly before God and humbly before himself. The name humility is perhaps more generally, at least as often, used to describe an attitude which a man takes before his fellow-men; and about that I should like to say something next, because it seems to me that is often misconceived. What is it to be humble or to have a low estimate of ourselves before one another? Is it any such unreasonable demand as this, that every man should really think that he is worse, wickeder, duller than every one of his fellows whom he meets? The moment that we state such an idea we see its impossibility. It confuses all moral distinctions, and shuts our eyes to facts. Are we bound then only to be humble before those whom we do cordially recognize as wiser and better than ourselves? That sets us at once to most invidious discriminations. No, the wisest and best man is to be humbled before the lowest and most degraded of his brethren but yet he is not to make believe to himself that he is no higher and better than his poor brother, he is not to

disown the good work that God has done for him. In what must his humility consist, then? In two things. The first will be the clear perception that it is God that has made him to differ from the poor creature before him; that except for God's help he must have been as bad as that. The sight of the poor wretch must make him feel again the tug of that rope of dependence which binds him to God, and which is all that keeps him out of the pit. So in the first place he is humbled before his fellow-man, because the sight of his fellow-man renews his humility before God. And the second thing will be this. The true Christian sees all the children of his Father worthy of that Father's love. All that he knows about his nature, he knows also about theirs. They, too, have souls, dumb, blind, it may be, but still worthy of the Father's love. For them, too, Christ has died. This is the sublime revelation of his faith about his fellows. And when he sees them thus, he sees the true use of these powers, of all this life that God has given him. To serve this hidden life of all his brethren, to help it out into some sort of consciousness and action, this is the object to which he wants to dedicate his saved soul, to the salvation of the souls of others. And this is his humility. Honor your own life as much as you will, only see in the lives of other men a value and essential dignity that makes them worthy of your giving yourself up to their help and culture, and then you are the humble man. If you believe with all your heart that there is nothing in you too good to be employed in the divine work of helping some lost child of God back to the Father, then you have really learnt the humility of Christ. Do you remember Him? The supper was ended, and

strangely on that solemn night the disciples had fallen into an untimely quarrel which of them should be the greatest, and then the Lord Himself rose from the table and tied the towel round His waist, and went from one wondering disciple to another and washed the feet of all. And then He interpreted His own parable: "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." Did Jesus compare Himself with each of those disciples, and own Himself the inferior of each? He only said by His exquisite action that there was something in every one of them, in serving which even His divinity found no inappropriate employment. It was the truth of His whole Incarnation wrought into a homely picture. And the humility of Christ's disciples, as He said, is one in nature with His own. The delicate woman for very love of Christ nursing Christ's lowest brethren in the most dreadful wards of the hospital: the brave missionary living his squalid life among the Indians in their wigwams; the mother giving her life for the child the Lord has given her; what is the power in them all but this, the certainty that every one of Christ's brethren is worthy of the consecration of the very best that Christ's disciple has to give? Does that seem hard for you to believe? Have you grown weary of looking for any signs of promise in this dull mass of fellow-men and withdrawn yourself into some luxury of self-culture, feeling as if what you had and were was too good to be wasted upon such creatures as these sick and poor and ignorant? You must be rescued from this proud conceit, not simply by counting yourself lower, but by valuing more highly the spiritual natures of these fellow-men. You must value them as He valued them, who gave His

life for them, before you can be as humble in their presence as He was; and that can come only by making yourself their servant. Only he who puts on the garment of humility finds how worthily it clothes his life. Only he who dedicates himself to the spiritual service of his brethren, simply because his Master tells him they are worth it, comes to know how rich those natures of his brethren are, how richly they are worth the total giving of himself to them.

This seems to me to be the ever-increasing joy of the minister's life, if one may venture for once to speak of his own work. A man becomes a minister because God says, "Go speak in the temple the words of this life." He begins the service of his fellow-men in pure obedience to God's command, but the joy and ever-richening delight of the minister s work is in finding how deep this human soul to which his Lord has sent him really is. The nature to which he ministers, as he meets its exhibitions here and there, is always amazing him with its spiritual capacity, is always proving itself capable and worthy of so much better and higher ministry than he can give it. So the minister of the Gospel finds his own humility and the delightfulness of his work ever increasing together

And this suggests one other point, which is the last that I shall speak of. I cannot but think that one of the truest ways in which Christianity has made humility at once a commoner and a nobler grace has been in the way in which it has furnished work for the higher powers of man, which used to be idle and only ponder proudly on themselves. Idleness standing in the midst of unattempted tasks is always proud. Work is always tending

to humility. Work touches the keys of endless activity, opens the infinite, and stands awe-struck before the immensity of what there is to do. Work brings a man into the good realm of facts. Work takes the dreamy youth who is growing proud in his closet over one or two sprouting powers which he has discovered in himself, and sets him out among the gigantic needs and the vast processes of the world, and makes him feel his littleness. Work opens the measureless fields of knowledge and skill that reach far out of our sight. I am sure we all know the fine, calm, sober humbleness of men who have really tried themselves against the tasks of life. It was great in Paul, and in Luther, and in Cromwell. It is something that never comes into the character, never shows in the face of a man who has never worked. Is not this what you would do for a boy whom you saw getting proud, — set him to work? He might be so poor of stuff that he would be proud of his work, poorly as he would do it. For the matter of that, men of poor stuff may be proud of anything, proud even of what they call their humility. But if he were really great enough to be humble at all, his work would bring him to humility. He would be brought face to face with facts. He would measure himself against the eternal pillars of the universe. He would learn the blessed lesson of his own littleness in the way in which it is always learnt most blessedly, by learning the largeness of larger things. And all this, which the ordinary occupations of life do for our ordinary powers, Christianity, with the work that it furnishes for our affections and our hopes, does for the higher parts of us.

It is so easy for us to go through the motions of

humility. It is — I will not say so hard — but it is so serious and so great a thing to be really humble. I have tried to show it to you as the consummate Christian grace; nay, rather as the star in the zenith, where all the sweep of Christian graces meets. Do you not see that it takes a whole Christian to be wholly humble? Christ came and plucked out of the depths of men's contempt this perfect quality and set it on the very summit of the hill of grace. I have tried to show you how He did it. He set men close to God, to their true selves, to the souls of their brethren, to the immensity of duty; and He said to them there, what there they understood, "Be humble!"

It was as if He took a proud, fretful man out of the worrying life of the selfish city and set him among the solemn mountains, and the mountains brought to him the blessed peace of humility and the sense of his own insignificance.

It seems to come to this, that Christianity is the religion of the broadest truthfulness. It does not set men at any work of mere resolution, saying, "Come, now, let us be humble." That would but multiply the endless specimens of useless self-mortification. But true Christianity puts men face to face with the humbling facts, the great realities, and then humility comes upon the soul, as darkness comes on the face of the earth, not because the earth has made up its mind to be dark, but because it has rolled into the great shadow.

It is the narrowness of our life that makes us proud I should think one of you merchants would be proud of his successful business if he saw nothing beyond it. I should think you men and women would be proud of your

splendid houses if you look no farther. But if you could only see God forever present in your life, and Jesus dying for your soul, and your soul worth Jesus' dying for, and the souls of your brethren precious in His sight, and the whole universe teeming with work for Him, then must come the humility of the Christian. To that humility let us devote ourselves, for in a humility like that alone is peace.

XX.

THE POSITIVENESS OF THE DIVINE LIFE.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." — GALATIANS v. 16.

WE very often forget, when we are wondering whether Christianity is really a religion for all men, capable of meeting all kinds of characters in every kind of age, how far that question went towards its settlement even in the times of the New Testament. We forget what a great variety of people became subject to the influences of the Gospel even then. We open one epistle after another, and always it is a different order and kind, often a wholly different race of men, to whom the new epistle is addressed. These Galatians, for instance, who were they? Years ago a party of Gauls from the Pyrenees had wandered eastward, and after many violent experiences had settled down here among the mountain fastnesses of Asia Minor. There were some Jews living among them, but mainly they were of another race, — a fierce, brave, generous, untamed nest of barbarians. It is strange always to light on a new company of men, and see how like they are to the men we know. Through the doorway of St. Paul's epistle we enter into the homes of these wild mountaineers; and when we once get over the wildness of their life, how clear their human nature stands before us. No one can read the epistle without feeling sure that St. Paul

liked them for the headlong and enthusiastic frankness which made the best part, as it made the worst part, of their character, and with which he had much in common.

What sort of people were they, then? "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The lusts of the flesh! Here they, are at work in Galatia, just as they are among us: the same temptations, the same vexatious, exacting, persecuting demands of this fleshly body in which we all live. And here are men who have so had their deeper nature stirred, their deeper ambition aroused, that they are trying not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. That struggle to be a self-controlling man, and not a self-indulgent brute, which is the glorious thing in all human history, is going on here in Galatia. What multitudes of strugglers there have been in that struggle, in what multitudes of ways! Leave out that struggle in its various forms from the life of man, and what would the life of man be worth? Here are these Galatians fighting the everlasting human fight in their remote corner of the world, trying to be men and not brutes; and here is Paul, their friend, their teacher, trying to tell them how. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

It is hardly possible to conceive any two human lots more different than that of the wild Galatian reading this epistle in his smoky hut, and that of us quiet Bostonians reading it in our quiet homes. But if our battle is the same as theirs, if the same lusts of the flesh are still here, as well as there, to be met and conquered, it is good for us, as well as for them, to try and see what help we can gather out of the words of St. Paul.

The point that strikes us in this passage, and the point

which I want to make my subject of this morning, is the positiveness of Paul's morality. It is so wonderfully bold and strong. There are two ways of dealing with every vice that troubles us, in either ourselves or others. One is to set to work directly to destroy the vice; that is the negative way. The other is to bring in as overwhelmingly as possible the opposite virtue, and so to crowd and stifle and drown out the vice; that is the positive way. Now there can be no doubt about St. Paul. Here comes his poor Galatian fighting with his lust of the flesh. How shall he kill it? St. Paul says not, "Do as few fleshly things as you can," setting him out on a course of repression; but, "Do just as many spiritual things as you can," opening before him the broad gates of a life of positive endeavor. And when we have thoroughly comprehended the difference of those two methods, and seen how distinctly St. Paul chose one instead of the other, we have laid hold on one of the noblest characteristics of his treatment of humanity, one that he had gained most directly from his Lord. I should despair of making any one see the distinction who did not know it in his own experience. Everywhere the negative and the positive methods of treatment stand over against each other, and men choose between them. Here is a man who is beset by doubts, perhaps about the very fundamental truths of Christianity. He may attack all the objections in turn, and at last succeed in proving that Christianity is not false. That is negative. Or he may gather about him the assurance of all that his religion has done and sweep away all his doubts with the complete conviction that Christianity is true. That is positive, and that is better. A man has a grudge against you, inveterate and

strong. You may attack his special grievance and try to remove it; or you may try not to show him that you meant him no harm, but by laborious kindness that you mean him every good, and so soften his obstinacy. A church is full of errors and foolish practices. It is possible to attack those follies outright, showing conclusively how foolish they are; or it is possible, and it is surely better, to wake up the true spiritual life in that church, which shall itself shed those follies and cast them out, or at least rob them of their worst harmfulness.

It is strange how far and wide this necessity of choosing between the positive and negative methods of treatment runs. In matters of taste, for instance, there are two distinct ways of trying to perfect the tasteful man. One is by the repression of what is in bad taste; the other is by the earnest fostering of what is good, — the method of repression and the method of stimulus. And everybody knows that no great effect of human genius was ever yet produced except in the latter, larger way. A cold and hard and limited correctness, a work "faultily faultless," weak and petty and timid, is all that the other methods make. For, whether in manners or in art, that which appears at first as coarseness is very often the strength of the whole work. To repress it for its coarseness is to make the whole feeble while we make it fine. To keep its strength and fill its strength with fineness, this is the positive method of the truest taste.

We are witnessing constantly the application of the same principle to the matter of reform, the breaking up of bad habits in an individual or in a community All prohibitory measures are negative. That they have their use no one can doubt. That they have their limits is

just as clear. He who thinks that nothing but the moral methods for the prevention of intemperance and crime can do the work is a mere theorist of the closet and knows very little about the actual state of human nature. But, on the other hand, the man who thinks that any strictest system of prohibition, most strictly kept in force, could permanently keep men from drink, or any other vice, knows little of human nature either. That nature is too active and too live to be kept right by mere negations. You cannot kill any one of its appetites by merely starving it. You must give it its true food, and so only can you draw it off from the poison that it covets. Here comes in the absolute necessity of providing rational and cheap amusements for the people whom our philanthropists are trying to draw off from the tavern and the gambling-house. Pictures, parks, museums, libraries, music, a healthier and happier religion, a brighter, sunnier tone to all our life, — these are the positive powers which must come in with every form of prohibition and restraint before our poorer people can be brought to live a sensible and sober life. Look at the lives that our rich people live. It is not any form of prohibition, legal or social, that keeps them from disgusting and degrading vice. It is the fulness of their lives, the warmth, glow, comfort, and abundance of their homes, the occupation of their minds, the positive and not the negative, the interest and plenty which the poor man never knows. Before you or I dare blame him, or despise him, we must, in imagination, empty our lives like his, and ask what sort of people we should be in the squalor of his garret, and the comfortlessness and hopelessness of a lot like his.

We see the same principle, the superiority of the po-

itive to the negative, constantly illustrated in matters of opinion. How is it that people change their opinions, give up what they have steadfastly believed, and come to believe something very different, perhaps its very opposite? I think we all have been surprised, if we have thought about it, by the very small number of cases in which men deliberately abandon positions because those positions have been disproved and seem to them no longer tenable. And even when such cases do occur, the effect is apt to be not good, but bad. The man abandons his disproved idea, but takes no other in its stead; until, in spite of their better judgment, many good men have been brought to feel that, rather than use the power of mere negation and turn the believer in an error into a believer in nothing, they would let their friend go on believing his falsehood, since it was better to believe something, however stupidly, than to disbelieve everything, however shrewdly. But what then? How do men change their opinions? Have you not seen? Holding still their old belief, they come somehow into the atmosphere of a clearer and a richer faith. That better faith surrounds them, fills them, presses on them with its own convincingness. They learn to love it, long to receive it, try to open their hands and hearts just enough to take it in and hold it along with the old doctrine which they have no idea of giving up. They think that they are holding both. They persuade themselves that they have found a way of reconciling the old and the new, which have been thought unreconcilable. Perhaps they go on thinking so all their lives. But perhaps some day something startles them, and they awake to find that the old is gone, and that the new opinion has become their opinion

by its own positive convincing power. There has been no violence in the process, nor any melancholy gap of infidelity between. Dear friends, if you have any friend who believes an error, and whom you want to make believe the truth, for his sake, for your own sake, for the truth's sake, I beg you deal with him positively and not negatively. Do not try only to disprove his error. Perhaps that error, because no error is wholly erroneous, is better for him than no faith at all. But make your truth live and convincing. Through every entrance force its life home on his life. Let him hear it in your voice, see it in your face, feel it in your whole life. Make it claim its true kinship with the truth that is lying somewhere in the midst of all his error. Who would go a hundred miles merely to make a Mohammedan disbelieve Mohammed? Who would not go half round the world to make him believe Christ and know the richness of the Saviour?

It seems to me that there is something so sublimely positive in Nature. She never kills for the mere sake of killing; but every death is but one step in the vast weaving of the web of life. She has no process of destruction which, as you turn it to the other side and look at it in what you know to be its truer light, you do not see to be a process of construction. She gets rid of her wastes by ever new plans of nutrition. This is what gives her such a courageous, hopeful, and enthusiastic look, and makes men love her as a mother and not fear her as a tyrant. They see by small signs, and dimly feel, this positiveness of her workings which it is the glory of natural science to reveal more and more.

And now, if we have illustrated enough, and understand our principle, let us come to St. Paul and his Gos-

pel. In Him, and in all the New Testament, there is nothing more beautiful than the clear, open, broad way in which the positive culture of human character is adopted and employed. If you have ever really entered into sympathy with your New Testament, you know, you certainly have sometimes felt, the thing I mean. We can conceive of a God standing over His moral creatures, and whenever they did anything that was wrong, showed any bad temper or disposition, putting a heavy hand on the malignant manifestation and stifling it; and so at last bringing them to a tight, narrow, timid goodness, — the God of repression. We conceive of such a God, and we know as we read the New Testament that the God of the New Testament is not that. We can conceive of another God who should lavish and pour upon His children the chances and temptations to be good, in every way should make them see the beauty of goodness, should so make life identical with goodness that every moment spent in wickedness should seem a waste, almost a death, should so open His fatherhood and make it real to them that the spontaneousness of the father's holiness should be reëchoed in the child, — not the God of restraint, but the God whose symbols should be the sun, the light, the friend, the fire, everything that is stimulating, everything that fosters and encourages and helps. We conceive of such a God, and when we read in the New Testament, lo, that is the God whose story is written there, the God whose glory we see in the face of Jesus Christ. The distinction is everywhere. Not by merely trying not to sin, but by entering farther and farther into the new life, in which, when it is completed, sin becomes impossible; not by merely weeding out wickedness, but by a new and

supernatural cultivation of holiness, does the saint of the New Testament walk on the ever-ascending pathway of growing Christliness and come at last perfectly to Christ. This is the true difference between law and grace; and the New Testament is the book of grace. Oh, that the richest and livest and most personal word in all the language did not sound so meagre, dead, and formal.

And this character of the New Testament must be at the bottom in conformity with human nature. The Bible and its Christianity are not in contradiction against the nature of the man they try to save. Let us never believe they are. They are at war with all his corruptions, and, in his own interest, though against his stubborn will, they are forever laboring to assert and reëstablish his true self. And in this fundamental character of the New Testament, by which it is a book not of prohibitions but of eager inspirations, there comes out a deep harmony between it and the heart of man. For man's heart is always rebelling against repression as a continuous and regular thing. Man is willing to make self-sacrifices for a certain temporary purpose. The merchant will give up his home, the student shut his books, the mother leave her household for a time, to do some certain work. The world is full of self-sacrifice, of the suppression of desires, the forcing of natural inclinations; but all the while under this crust the fire is burning; all the time under this self-sacrifice, there is a restless, hungry sense that it is not right, that it cannot be final; there is a crying out for self-indulgence. All the time there is a great human sense that not suppression but expression is the true life. Every now and then, in the most guarded and self-sacrificing men, that restlessness breaks out, and through the

strictest moral prohibitions, which have been growing hard and strong for a whole lifetime of obedience, the imprisoned spontaneity bursts forth; and some wild, flagrant act is the man's assertion that no law or practice of self-sacrifice can kill or has a right to kill the man's live self. This I see everywhere in man's history, and this it seems to me as if the Gospel so exactly met. It comes to a young man who is just becoming aware of what a forced and artificial and arbitrary state of things there is in this world where his work is just beginning. He has just found out that he has a heart full of passions and desires; and he is just growing half indignant and half perplexed as all the moral laws of life, all the decencies of society, all the proverbs and traditions of his fathers gather up about him and give him their good advice. "You will find in yourself," they say, "this passion. It is there simply to be sacrificed and killed." "You will find that appetite. It is never to be gratified." "You will find such and such a desire. Your duty in life is to watch for that desire's rising, and every time it shows its head to smite it and drive it back." "You are full of the lusts of the flesh. They are put into you that you may not fulfil them." He takes this programme for his life and starts out to perform it. It is not very inspiring surely. Its hard negations little suit the eager desire to be doing something strong and positive which belongs to his eager years. It is taking a brave young soldier who wants to be out in the very front scaling the enemy's ramparts, and setting him to guard the baggage in the rear. That is the low and spiritless tone of so much of the negative morality which rules all the way up from the teaching of the nursery to the doctors of

moral philosophy in their college chairs. It makes all enthusiasm of virtue impossible, and instead of letting the effort to be good become, as it ought to be, the brightest, keenest, and most interesting search that man can undertake, it makes it the dull, heavy thing which we all see it and all feel it, — the dreary, hopeless trying not to be bad which drags so heavily and fails so constantly.

The young man accepts this theory of life, this negative theory of pure repression for a while; but by and by there comes a great explosion and remonstrance. "It cannot be," he says. "These passions cannot have been given me just to be killed. These strong desires are not in me only to be sacrificed. Why am I living this guarded life of circumspection? Here I am saying No! to all my strongest appetites, and for what? to make this poor, tame, colorless, half-animate conventionality of virtue which is worth nothing after it is made. It is not right. The law of life cannot be endless self-restraint, endless self-disappointment. I must try something freer and more natural. Let me let myself go. Let me give up restraint and try indulgence. Let every passion have its way." And then what comes? Ah, you all know: that wild unbridled life that seems so free and is such a slavery; that endless cheating of one's self to think that he is happy in his dissipation when he knows that he is wretched; that reckless flinging away of health and vitality till they are all gone, and the worn-out young man settles down into a middle age of enforced and dreary decency, and expects an old age of imbecility and pain. And yet at the back of that young man's outbreak there was a certain clutching at what really is a truth. He could not believe that self-mortification was the dreary

law of life. He did not believe that the killing of the powers and appetites which He had given them was the education God intended for His children. And now what has the New Testament, what has Christianity, what has Christ to say to that young, hot, and rebellious soul? Anything? Remember, his is just the soul that is running its career of ruin in our schools, our colleges, our stores, along our grandest and our meanest streets. It seems to me I can see Christ approach that man, that just rebellious boy. I do not hear Him use such words of utter and unsparing rebuke as I have many a time heard lavished on youthful dissipation, and yet his face is sadder over that poor boy's wandering than father's or mother's face ever grew. My brother, I can hear him say, you are not wholly wrong. Nay, at the bottom, you are right. Self-mortification, self-sacrifice, is not the first or final law of life. You are right when you think that these appetites and passions were not put into you merely to be killed, and that the virtue which only comes by their restraint is a poor, colorless, and feeble thing. You are right in thinking that not to restrain yourself and to refrain from doing, but to utter yourself, to act, to do, is the purpose of your being in the world. Only, my brother, this is not the self you are to utter, these are not the acts you are to do. There is a part in you made to think deeply, made to feel nobly, made to be charitable and chivalric, made to worship, to pity, and to love. You are not uttering yourself while you keep that better self in chains and only let these lower passions free. Let me renew those nobler powers, and then believe with all your heart and might that to send out those powers into the intensest exercise is the one worthy purpose of your life.

Then these passions, which you are indulging because you cannot believe that you were meant to give your whole life up to bridling them, will need no forcible bridling, and yet, owning their masters in the higher powers which come out to act, they will be content to serve them. You will not fulfil your passions any longer, but the reason will not be that you have resumed the weary guard over your passions which you tried to keep of old. It will be that you have given yourself up so utterly to the seeking after holiness that these lower passions have lost their hold upon you. You will not so much have crushed the carnal as embraced the spiritual. I shall have made you free. You will be walking in the spirit, and so will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

Is not this Christ's method? Is not this the tone of His encouraging voice? "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," but "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is the positive attainment and not the negative surrender. It is the self indulgence of the highest and not the self-surrender of the lowest that is the great end of the Gospel. And yet I know that there comes up to you at once very much in the teachings of Christ and in the whole spirit of Christianity which seems to contradict what I am saying. Has not the religion of Jesus always been called the very religion of self-sacrifice? Is not self-surrender exalted into a virtue and crowned with glory as it never was in any other faith? That certainly is true! But we want to read the Gospels far more wisely than we have read them yet unless we see that in Christ's teaching self-sacrifice is always temporary and provisional, merely the clearing the way for the positive culture which alone is creative

of those great results of spiritual life which the Lord loved. The right hand is to be cut off, the right eye is to be plucked out, some part, some organ of the body is to be put to death, but it is only that the man may "enter into life." The life, and not the death, is the object. And just this is the reason why self-sacrifice in Christianity has acquired a glory that it never had before; because it has looked beyond its own negations, and ministered to, and caught some of the splendor of, the positive culture that was to follow it; as John the Baptist ministered to and caught some of the beauty of the coming Christ. Indeed, the negative discipline, the discipline of prohibitions, is the John the Baptist who merely cries, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God," and then the positive Christ comes. The negative decreases that the positive may increase. How easily we see the difference. Two young men restrain their passions. You ask one of them, "Why do you deny yourself this dissipation?" and his answer is, "Because it is wrong. I must not do it." And you respect him for his self-control. You ask the other and he says something different, though the course of life to which it brings him is just the same. He says, "I am so busy about other things that I love better. I have greater and more beautiful work to do and cannot come down. It is my doing of duty that helps me to resist temptation." When a man simply, honestly, unaffectedly, without cant or hypocrisy, by lip or life, says something of that sort, then there is something more than respect for him in our hearts, — there is a spontaneous affection and enthusiasm.

The self-sacrifice of the Christian is always an echo

of the self-sacrifice of Christ. It is true just in proportion as it copies that perfect pattern. The Christian's self-surrender is called a being "crucified to the world,' taking its very name from the crucifixion of our Lord. When, then, we turn to Christ's crucifixion to get there the key to the character of the crucifixion of the Christian we see, I am sure, what I have just been speaking of. How different, how utterly different that sacrifice of Calvary is from all the most heroic sacrifices that heroic men have made under the pressure of hard necessity. How its positive power shines out through it. It is not simply the giving up of something, it is the laying hold of something too. He who suffers is evidently conquering fear by the present power of a confident hope, a triumphant certainty. It is because He is walking in the Spirit that He is able so victoriously not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It was because He clung to His Father that he came strong out of Gethsemane.

I think that no one reads the story of the Saviour's crucifixion without feeling underneath it all a certain undertone of triumph, a latent joyousness which is never lost through all its horror. Here are the fearful circumstances, the brutal soldiers, the cowardly governor, the mocking dress, the nails driven through the quivering hands, the groans, the taunts, the weeping women, the darkness, — everything to make it horrible, — and yet, underneath it all there runs a current of confident and expectant joy. What does it mean? No doubt, in part, it is the accumulated sense of joy which has gathered there from the subsequent experience of the multitudes who, in all ages, have found at that cross salvation. But it is not all this. Even those who stood around and wit-

nessed the crucifixion must have felt it. It surely was in the mind of that centurion. It is the clear conviction that we are witnessing there upon the cross, not merely the murder of a body, but the triumph of a soul; not merely the humbling and wounding and lacerating of a flesh, but the exaltation, the coronation of a spirit. Dear friends, the New Testament talks about our being crucified with Christ. Have you never, in your own suffering or in some suffering you watched, had opened to you strange new glimpses of the complete meaning of those words? Have you never been surprised by detecting beneath your sorrow that undertone of triumph, that latent joyousness which makes the wonder of your Lord's "Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit,' have you never found your cross too a lifting-up, the everlasting parable of the thorns that made a crown repeating itself for you.

Indeed, how through the whole life of Jesus the subject that I am preaching to you about to-day, the positiveness of the Divine Life, found its abundant illustration. He was the sinless man. Yet in Him, just as in you or me, were all these lusts of the flesh, all these passions and appetites, that make our sins. Who can be thankful enough for that story of the Temptation, the story of the Saviour in the wilderness with the Devil, and that other story of Gethsemane, both of which tell us so clearly that the same weaknesses that are in us were in their germs, the self same things, in Him? And yet He never sinned. His sinlessness, even if He had done nothing else for our salvation, would stand out still for the most saving fact for man that the world ever saw. There is something very touching in the way in which the world

of men, so full of sin and of the consciousness of sin, has clung about that certainty of the one sinless man. Whatever else they believed or disbelieved about Him, men could not let it go, this assurance that there has been once here a man like us who did not sin. And yet a large part of the fascination which has kept men's eyes fastened upon Him certainly comes not from the mere fact of His sinlessness, but from its quality. It is of just the kind that holds men's hearts and kindles their enthusiasm. And its quality is positiveness. If Jesus had lived a guarded, cautious life, forever trying merely not to do wrong, His character might have been described in lectures on moral philosophy from a professor's chair; but it would never have been taken home as it has been taken into the world's very heart of hearts. It was because His sinlessness was holiness that the world seized on it. The reason why He did not serve the Devil was the Godhood of which He was full. Nothing can be more unlike the repressive theories of virtue in their methods and results than the way in which Christ lived His positive life, full of force and salvation.

Think back one moment from the God incarnate to the God revealed, from Jesus to the Father. What shall we say about the dear and awful life of God our Maker and our King? He does no sin. And why? Is it a blasphemy to ask the question? Is it not good for us to ask it, if in trying to answer it we have to realize the supreme and awful positiveness of the life of God? He does no sin because of the completeness of His infinite goodness, because from end to end of His unmeasured nature holiness and love fill completely His every capacity and thought.

And now how shall we bring all this to our own lives and fix it there? Shall we not say to one another, Let us pray God for a positive life. Not merely a life that is not bad, but a good life, truly and spiritually and deeply good. You are tempted to steal. Do not stand over the object which you covet, making perpetually resolutions not to touch it; but go, throw yourself into some honest, brave, healthy work, that shall establish for you right and fair relations with your fellow-men, and then the mean life of the thief will lose its enticement for you so entirely that you will wonder how you ever could have tolerated the thought of stealing for an hour. If you are tempted to skepticism, do not spend your time in trying not to disbelieve, do not study too many books of answers to objections. Even if they solve your doubts, they keep your religion in a low tone. But set yourself where the manliest faith is living its bravest life. Set what little faith you have to doing its best work, so it will grow into more. Make more of what you do believe than of what you do not believe. I have heard men say, "I believe nothing!" "Well," I ask them, "and what is it that you don't believe?" And then they specify some minor point, some comparative trifle. "But," I say to them, "do you not believe in God and in his help, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the everlasting life?" "Oh, yes," the answer is, "I believe all those." And yet the man has been so busy thinking about what he did not believe that all these which he did believe have gone for nothing, and have grown into no earnest faithful life.

So everywhere positives, not negatives. The way to get out of self-love is to love God. Do we not see what Paul was teaching the Galatians when he said, "Walk

in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"?

And to help us to this positive life we have this positive salvation, these positive things fairly revealed to us, God's will, Christ's love, and the eternal life. It is no hard master that stands over us. It is the King in His beauty. Before Him repentance and faith become but one perfect act. When we really get the scales off our eyes and see Him, the struggle of life will be over. We shall not have to leave our sins to go to Him, as if they were two acts. The going of the soul to Him will be itself the easy casting away of sin, the easy mastery of this world which masters us so now. May God grant it for us all.

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